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Clear Meaning

Studies on a Thirteenth Century rDzogs-chen Text

by

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Abstract

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This thesis is devoted to a study of the history and content of the Tantra of Great Unreified Clear Meaning or sPros-bral Don-gsal Chen-po'i rGyud in Tibetan (PBD). The PBD claims a very ancient history, asserting its origins to be with the famed founder of the Great Perfection tradition dGa-rab rDo-rje, who is thought to have lived in the first century C.E. The PBD is a "treasure" (gter-ma) text, which is believed to have been hidden in Tibet by the teacher Padmasambhava during the eighth century C.E. and discovered by Guru Chos-kyi dBang-phyug in the thirteenth century. Guru Chos-dbang taught this text in the year 1257, and it was written down by one of his disciples. The PBD came to be included in the great collection of Tantric texts known as the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma (rNying-ma rGyud-'bum), and is found in this collection today. As

such, the PBD represents the teachings of the rNying-ma school of Tibetan Buddhism in general, and their thirteenth century manifestation in particular.

The essence of the teaching of the PBD is that all living beings have a pure awareness (rig-pa) which is non-conceptual, uncontrived, and the fundamental state of the mind (sems). This awareness is the fundamental ground on which both the deluded experience of samsara and the pure experience of nirvana are based. When this awareness is falsely intuited based on the primary ignorance of subject-object duality and the emotional defilements which arise from this duality there is the experience of samsara. When this awareness is directly intuited it is Buddhahood itself.

The history of the PBD is fully discussed in this thesis, and a thematic study of the major points made in the PBD is presented in the main body of the thesis. The PBD discusses topics fundamental to the Buddhology of the rNying-ma school. This thesis presents the PBD's views on the Base (gzhi), delusion, the Buddha-kāya, wisdom, the path, recognition, and the Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen) vehicle. These are the major themes presented in the PBD. This investigation provides an insight into the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism as they are reflected in a primary text, and provides an insight into a "treasure" text of the rNying-ma school in the thirteenth century in particular.

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CHAPTER 1

History of the Text

The Tantra of Great Unreified Clear Meaning, or *sPros-bral Don-gsal Chen-po'i rGyud* in the Tibetan language (hereafter the PBD),[1] is a text belonging to the tradition of esoteric Buddhism. The text is a discussion on the view, meditation, practice, and result of what it holds to be the highest path of Buddhism, the *rDzogs-chen* or Great Perfection. Its intention is to explain how enlightenment

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1 The PBD is contained in the *rNying-ma rGyud-'bum*. There are currently two versions of the *rNying-ma rGyud-'bum* available. These are: 1) *Rnying ma'i Rgyud 'Bum, A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated during the Period of First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet*, ed. by Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche (Thimpu, Bhutan: n.p. 1973) where the PBD is found in volume Cha p.374-608, and 2) *The Mtshams-Brag Manuscript of the Rnin Ma Rgyud 'Bum*, (Thimpu, Bhutan: National Library, Royal Government of Bhutan, 1982) where the PBD is found in volume XIII, p.1-296. The version of the PBD found in the 1982 edition of the *rNying-ma rGyud-'bum* is superior with regard to spelling and sense, while the 1973 version occasionally offers superior readings. Both have been used in preparation for this study. Page references to the PBD in this thesis refer to the 1982 version. All translations of the PBD in this thesis are my own.

can be instantly intuited by the practitioner, without his relying on any kind of gradual development or cultivation of spiritual qualities. As a dialogue on the Great Perfection the text rejects the common Buddhist method of dealing with the absolute, for unlike more traditional Buddhist works the PBD uses positive language to describe the ultimate reality. In fact, the PBD presents an account of Buddhism that is almost diametrically opposed to the traditional renderings of Buddhism in many ways.

It is the intention of this thesis to discuss the PBD in full. I will begin by presenting the history of the text. Then I will discuss my methodology in analyzing the text. I will then discuss the major themes presented in the text. Finally I will conclude with a~~n~~ summary of the important points in the PBD and the areas in which further research is needed.

It is not the case that the ideas presented in the PBD are new to Buddhism. The PBD itself is a very old text,[2] though perhaps not the oldest to describe the Great Perfection teachings. The transmission of the teachings of the Great Perfection must certainly go back to the arising of Tantric Buddhism in India, perhaps as early as the first century C.E.[3] The teachings of the Great Perfection are

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[2] See p.21 of this thesis.

[3] See p.33 of this thesis.

generally held to have been made immanent in this world by a certain dGa'-rab rDo-rje, who received them directly from the Buddha. It is not, however, from the historical Buddha Śakyamuni that dGa'-rab rDo-rje received the teachings, but from the ultimate principle of Buddhahood itself -- referred to in the PBD as rDo-rje 'Chang. To understand the historicity of the PBD it will be useful to first examine what the text itself says about its history. Based on this information and a careful analysis of the text scholarly discussion of the claims made in the text will follow.

Teaching of the PBD

To get an immediate insight into the style of the text, as well as to see what the text itself says about the place and time that this teaching was given, I will now quote extensively from the opening passage of the text:

> In the Sanskrit language of India [this book is] the:
>
> Tilaka Duhakala Tradu Tilaka Duhakala Tantra Mahatantra.
>
> In the Tibetan language it is the:
>
> sPros-bral Don-gsal Chen-po'i rGyud
>
> [In the English language it is:
>
> The Tantra of The Great Unreified Clear Meaning]

Homage to the Body, Speech and Mind of the Omniscient and Glorious Great rDo-rje 'Chang!

In the great unbuilt palace of the Thirty Three [gods] (Tuṣita) abides the chief of all the gods known as "Indra, Ruler of the Gods." He is surrounded by a retinue of subservient gods. He stopped a confrontation which had created a great battle among the asuras,[4] then [gave] these sacred instructions for establishing bliss:

Dharma Sarva Tilaka Aham Rupitikaya Triruka Rusadupihi Nama

Thus I have at one time heard:

The Blessed One Great Dor-rje 'Chang, who is the actual intuition of self-awareness (Rang-rig rTogs-pa), whose kāya[5] -- the force

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4 Asuras are one of the six classes of living beings in Buddhist cosmology. They are extremely envious of the splendors of the gods and are excessively devoted to battle. For a full description see Sgam-po-pa, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, translated by Herbert Guenther, (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1971), p.68.

5 Kāya refers to the state of true being. This technical term is discussed in detail in this thesis on p.87 .

(rtsal) of wisdom -- appears without a self nature, who exists in a variety of bodily colors, who, in the pose of the equanimous lotus position, acts in a manner which teaches the Mudradharma (phyag-rgya-chos) for he is the kaya of wisdom, whose countenance is brilliant clarity -- unhindered in all the ten directions, abides in the abode totally pure by its own nature known as "Lotus Clear Bliss" (Pad-ma bDe-gsal). It's cause is through the arising of the force of wisdom in unhindered light. It is caused by the five colors. Its shape is that of a square. Its walls are formed from precious stones of the five colors. Its palace is round. On the outside it is encircled by a wheel of four spokes. It has towers. Its center courtyard is full of goddesses. Its four doors have dismounting facilities. It is endowed with such requisites as dakinis of many kinds. The vajra fence at its perimeter is surrounded by lotuses. All this appears without a self nature, like a rainbow in the atmosphere.

In such a grand celestial palace abides the Teacher, the Blessed One, the Great rDo-

rje 'Chang. His retinue, the unhindered force of wisdom, appears as the five families (rigs-lnga). The unhindered force of wisdom also [appears as] male and female [Bodhi]sattvas and male and female Wrathful Ones. The Lord of Secrets Phyag-na rDo-rje is the retinue of solicitators. dGa'-rab rDo-rje is the retinue of compilers. There are also the five kinds of dakinis, and these five: The Pacifier of Purna, the Vajra Wrath-faced Woman, the Single Crown Jewel Woman, the Corpse Eater Shanti with his rosary of skulls, and He with Wings of Vajra Wind. Each of these has his own retinue of innumerable dakinis.

At that time the Lord of Secrets led the retinue in making a seven-fold circumambulation [of rDo-rje 'Chang]. Then, sitting down before him, [the Lord of Secrets] addressed the Teacher with these words:

"O, O Blessed One, Great rDo-rje 'Chang, you who have attained power in the force of the intuition (rtogs) of the meaning of self-awareness, [you who are] the self-perfected three kāyas dwelling in the mode of the

Sambhogakaya, [you who are] unreified awareness, perfection in the Dharmakāya, [you who are] the unhindered force of flickering (*'gyu-ba*), arising as the Nirmāṇakāya, [you who] in the way of the Sambhogakāya, are not established by self nature , [you who] remove both delusion and conceptualization, bringing forth the benefit of living beings: When it is near the moment of the Kaliyuga (*snyigs-ma'i-dus*), the path which leads through the nine vehicles is very lengthy. The five poisons of the obscurations are very ripe in the continuum. Pious aspirations and contemplation of doctrinal views are mentally fabricated religion (*blo-yi-chos*).

I request the sacred instructions (*man-ngag*) of the Great Tantra of Unreified Clear Meaning, the instructions which show the sudden enlightenment (*cig-car*) into the Dharmakāya, which realize the way of being of self-awareness, the instructions which cannot be harmed by objects, [the instructions] of self-liberation no matter how the two forces [of good and evil] arise, which demonstrate the great meaning with the lamp of words, which comprehend the meaning

> when known through reading, and which are decidedly certain through the connection of words and meaning.[6]

The presence of a Sanskrit name at the beginning of the text should not be taken as a certain sign that the text was originally composed in Sanskrit. It is possible that some portions of the text are truly Sanskrit in origin, while the possibility is very good that the majority of the text is Tibetan in origin. The Tibetan title is not a translation of the Sanskrit title. The English title that I have offered is a translation of the Tibetan title. It is difficult to make sense of the Sanskrit title, except for noting that Tilaka is the Sanskrit word for the Tibetan word Thig-le.[7] In chapter one hundred twenty two of the PBD are listed the various names of the text.[8] None of these names has the word Thig-le in it. It is most likely that this Sanskrit title is a spurious creation of the Tibetan writer. It is also significant that no translator of the PBD into Tibetan is mentioned in the colophon.[9]

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[6] PBD, pp.1-4.

[7] Lokesh Chandra, Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary, (Kyoto: Rinsen Book Co., 1982), p.1029.

[8] The PBD offers, in total, seventeen different names for itself. It also offers specific reasons for each of these names. For a complete listing of the names of the PBD, see appendix A.

[9] See this thesis, p.11ff.

In the opening passage we gain the information that the Tantra was promulgated when Indra, the ruler of the Tusita heaven, had conquered the demi-gods or asuras and required a teaching for establishing bliss. This unusual passage which precedes the text of the Tantra itself is significant, for in the dogma of traditional Buddhism, represented by texts such as The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, the gods are incapable of gaining the Buddhist teaching.[10] It is also significant that Indra is not mentioned again in the entire text. The implication that it was due to the need of the highest god of the world that the Tantra came into the world of men shows that the text wishes, from the beginning, to proclaim its divine status.[11]

It is only after this introductory passage that we find the significant words "Thus have I at one time heard." These are the words which formally begin the Tantra. After the formal beginning of the Tantra we are told that the Blessed One rDo-rje 'Chang lives in a great celestial palace in a land called Lotus Clear Bliss, and this is the place where the Tantra is actually taught. Many other characters are mentioned in this opening passage, but there are only

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[10] See Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, p.68.

[11] On the difference between mundane ('jig-rten-pa) and supramundane ('jig-rten las 'das-pa) gods see D.S. Ruegg, "On the Supramundane and the Divine in Buddhism," Tibet Journal, 1976, 3-4.

two among those mentioned that are mentioned again. These are Phyag-na rDo-rje, the solicitor or questioner, and dGa'-rab rDo-rje, the compiler. In the actual body of the text Phyag-na rDo-rje is identified with rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa, and the two names are used interchangeably. rDo-rje 'Chang and rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa are two Tibetan translations for the Sanskrit name Vajradhara.[12] It therefore turns out that the text of the PBD is a dialogue between Vajradhara (rDo-rje 'Chang) and Vajradhara (rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa). In order to avoid confusion I have left the names in the Tibetan rather than translate them into Sanskrit.

As I have pointed out, the text of the PBD is a dialogue between rDo-rje 'Chang and rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa. Each chapter begins with a question by rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa (Phyag-na rDo-rje, the Lord of Secrets) which is followed by rDo-rje 'Chang's answer. It is therefore the Lord of Secrets that begins the Tantra with his request for the PBD to be taught.

It is immediately apparent that many subjects of central importance to the PBD are mentioned right at the beginning of the text. The request for the teachings of Instant Enlightenment and the comments that the path of the nine vehicles is too lengthy are especially important. From the beginning the PBD proposes to teach the path of instant enlightenment, and rejects all gradual methods of progress.

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[12] Lokesh Chandra, Dictionary, p.1285 and p.1298.

These are subjects that will be dealt with in detail in this thesis.

The Colophon

Now that we know where, and in what company, the PBD claims to have been taught, it will be worth while to look at the PBD's colophon. The colophon at the end of the text describes the transmission of the text from its first teaching to its being put into writing. Here is the colophon:

> Ratna Raja Maha
>
> This Tantra of the Great Clear Meaning of the Unification of the Buddha (Sangs-rgyas mNyam-sbyor Don gSal-ma Chen-mo'i rGyud) which liberates by perceiving it is completely finished.
>
> Guhya gTad rGya rGya rGya/ gTad rGya rGya rGya/ gTad rGya rGya rGya.
>
> This Great Tantra of secret sacred instructions was complied by the retinue of compilers, dGa'-rab rDo-rje, and set forth in words and letters. He explained it to Guru 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen. He explained it to Guru Śri Singha. He explained it to the Guru of Orgyan, Padma.
>
> I, Padmasambhava of Orgyan, during the

degenerate time [of the last] five hundred [years] have hidden this Great Mother of all the Dharmas, this generator of all things, enjoined and perfect as a self-treatise (rang-gzhung), The Great Tantra of Unreified Clear Meaning, for the sake of persons with the three endowments (ldan-gsum-skyes-bu). This meaning of the unification of sentient beings and Buddha does not rely on hearing, thinking, or meditating. It is realized by its teaching and is clear by its recollection. Its empowerment is attained by meeting with it, and liberation by perceiving it.

A Dharma which attains the result in this way is like a wish-fulfilling jewel. This secret treasure of Mind Treasure (thugs-gter) and Repeated Treasure (yang-gter)[13] fills in incompletenesses and gathers the fragments.

This harvest of encounter, suitable for practice, is a jewel of the heart. It is a fruit for the eye.

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13 For a full discussion of "treasures" and the different types thereof see Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Hidden Teachings of Tibet, An Explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism, (London: Wisdom Publications, 1986).

I myself am not small in learning. My knowledge is equal to that of rDo-rje 'Chang. Therefore this Secret Treasure of the Mind is the only treasure between the sky and the earth.

Even if this should meet with one of fortunate karma it [should be] contemplated in his mind for fifteen years. During the passage of this time for the secret vow (gsang-dam) and vow-protectors the mind (blo) of samsara [should be] given up and the certain meaning searched. Give up life in devotion to the Guru. Not everyone has exemplary praise for the three [jewels].

When the time arrives the fortunate are protected from those who have attained it as an oral transmission (snyan-brgyud) for the sake of living beings.

Fearing the decline of this unexcelled supreme Tantra, this Tantra is hidden in three treasure-troves (gter-kha). One is the Northern Treasure at Praduntse. It is hidden in the heart of Vairocana. It will be brought forth in the tiger year. One is the Repeated Treasure hidden here. It will be brought forth in the snake year. One is in

the cave of mKha-ri dGye-ri. It will be brought forth in the monkey year.

Furthermore, the mother and son are here complete. The three Tantras of Further Treasure are in the way of the son. This is because the potency of the mother is here condensed. The supreme _Tantra of Clear Meaning_ is in the way of the mother. This is because it generates all things and is enjoined as a self-treatise.

In this way it is profound, so it is a Mind Treasure and is not taught at the rank of a Further Treasure.

In this way the meaning of the unification of Buddha is taught by this, so may the Tantra come to its place.

Some will cover it by the darkness of commentary. Some will block it with the claw of interpretation. Some will poison it with the content stomach of scriptural quotation. Therefore may the Pronounced Transmission (_bka'-brgyud_) find its own place.

If it is difficult to interpret the meaning, rely on the Guru. Make a hundred accumulations [of merit] and offer mandalas. Examine the similes minutely and apply them

to the meaning. There is only liberation by examination.

May this meet with those possessing a mind of profound knowledge and possessing compassion. Why? Because the essence of the Secret Mantra is profound knowledge.

Iti Guhya rGya rGya rGya.

Eh Ma Ho! The pronouncement of the Buddhas of the three times has fallen on a treasure finder like me, Chos-dbang. A supreme Tantra of Essence like this has come into my possession! This is certainly the greatest miracle among the great!

sNang-don Dad-seng of gZhu-snye requested [this Tantra] from the Nirmāṇakāya Chos-kyi dBang-phyug at the monastery of Lha-bro in Lho-brag in the year of the snake, and wrote it down. By the virtue which arises from this may this Tantra of all things continually liberate![14]

It will be noted that this colophon has three distinct sections. The first is the account of its transmission before entering Tibet. Here we are told that the compiler mentioned at the beginning of the text, dGa'-rab rDo-rje,

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14 PBD, p.286f.

composed the PBD in words and letters. From dGa'-rab rDo-rje the teaching went to 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen, then to Śri Singha, and finally to Padmasambhava. The next section of the colophon is Padmasambhava's account of how he hid the text in three places so that its teaching would not decline, with advice regarding the finding and understanding of the text. Finally there is the section discussing the revelation of the PBD in Tibet. Here we are told that the text came to Guru Chos-dbang (Chos-kyi dBang-phyug) and was written down by his student sNang-don Dad-seng.

It should be noted that the beginning of the colophon tells us that dGa'-rab rDo-rje put the PBD into writing, and the end of the colophon tells us that sNang-don Dad-seng put the text into writing. It is possible that both people put the text into words, but was it the same text exactly that they were concerned with?

The identification of the PBD as a "treasure" (gter-ma) is most significant here. "Treasures" are sacred objects and particularly literary works that are said to have been hidden during the "early spread" (snga-dar) of Buddhism in Tibet, the eighth and ninth centuries C.E.,[15] so that they

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15 The coming of Buddhism to Tibet is divided by Tibetan historians into an "early spread" (snga-dar), representing the period before Atiśa came to Tibet (1042 C.E.) and a "later spread" (phyi-dar), represented by the period after Atiśa came to Tibet. See Guiseppe Tucci, The Religions of Tibet, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) p.19 and p.250.

might be rediscovered in a later period. The PBD claims to have been hidden by Padmasambhava for this purpose.

One of the features of the "treasure" texts is that they are often written in "Ḍākinī Script." Ḍākinī script is writing that can only be understood by the person who has the karmic connection to read it. To others it may appear as strange scribblings. The text of the "treasure" is written on what are known as "yellow scrolls" (shog-ser).[16] Such scrolls may not actually be yellow, and they may not actually be scrolls. In many cases the content of a treasure is nothing more than a small scrap of paper with strange writings on it. The treasure finder who uncovers such a "yellow scroll" is thought to have the ability to draw out an entire "treasure," perhaps of great length, from this mysterious writing. The rationale for this is that the treasure finder is believed to have been one of the original disciples of Padmasambhava in a former life, where he or she received the teaching of the treasure in full. Upon finding the yellow scroll the memory of this previous life is brought forth, and the treasure finder is able to compose an entire teaching based on it. Of course it may also be the case that the "treasure" found is in fact a complete manuscript, a partial manuscript, or even some other object

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16 See Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Hidden Teachings, pp.103, 127, 237.

such as an image of the Buddha.[17]

As the PBD is a "treasure" there is some difficulty in arriving at what might be called an Ur-text, whether such a text might represent the composition of dGa'-rab rDo-rje himself, the "yellow scroll" hidden by Padmasambhava and found by Guru Chos-dbang, or even the text as composed by sNang-don Dad-seng. The problem is compounded by the fact that the PBD remained as a copied manuscript until the compilation of the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma (rNying-ma rGyud-'bum) begun by Ratna gLing-pa (1403-1479) and completed by 'Jigs-med gLing-pa (born 1729).[18] There are variations in the text of the PBD in the different editions of the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma, yet these amount to nothing more than minor variants in readings and spellings.[19] It is safe to assume that we still possess the text of the PBD as Ratna gLing-pa had it.

The stages of revision that the PBD took between the first composition of dGa'-rab rDo-rje and Ratna gLing-pa's including it in the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma are difficult to determine. The text of the PBD does

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17 Ibid, p.77.

18 See Eva Dargyay, The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet, (New York: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1978) p.70, p.144-147. Permission to quote extensively from this work kindly provided by Eva Dargyay.

19 See this thesis p.1, note 1. See also Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, pp.144ff, and 186ff.

contain in it short fragments of a mysterious writing which can be identified as "ḍākinī script."[20] There is no statement whether these writings are the original content of the treasure, or whether there was more. Also to be considered is the fact that the questioner is called Phyag-na rDo-rje in the first two chapters of the PBD while in later chapters he is almost always referred to as the Lord of Secrets or rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa. Another feature of the first two chapters of the text is their discussion of the "force of good" (bzang-rtsal) and the "force of evil" (ngan-rtsal). We are told that the PBD will discuss the way good wins over evil, yet after the second chapter there is no discussion of these points whatever. This may constitute evidence that the first two chapters are perhaps earlier than the rest of the volume. Each chapter of the PBD begins with a question from the Lord of Secrets which is followed by rDo-rje 'Chang's answer. There is a very orderly progression from subject to subject. This gives the impression that much of the text may represent the teachings of Guru Chos-dbang as given to his disciples and written down by sNang-don Dad-seng.

The statements in the colophon that this text "fills in incompletenesses and gathers the fragments" is significant. The words are put into the mouth of Padmasambhava, which

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20 PBD, p.91, 288.

would seem to indicate that there were missing portions even during the early history of the text. Yet if we assume that even this colophon was the composition of Guru Chos-dbang then the reference would indicate that the text was not complete when it reached Guru Chos-dbang's attention. The statement that the text should be contemplated for fifteen years before being revealed to the public may be taken as an indication that the contents of the PBD were on Guru Chos-dbang's mind for a long time before he taught sNang-don Dad-seng. The statement that sNang-don Dad-seng wrote the teachings down is an indication that Guru Chos-dbang did not have a written text from which to teach.

If we are not to assume that the PBD is a spurious "treasure" we must assume that Guru Chos-dbang did in fact find something which was later developed into the text of the PBD. There is no way of knowing just what it was that Guru Chos-dbang found,[21] but it is safe to assume that the text as we have it represents both the findings of Guru Chos-dbang as well as his own inspiration in teaching.

I will therefore not attempt to define an Ur-text of the PBD, as there is not enough evidence of the text's history to make such definition possible. It will be

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21 _The Great Treasure Discoveries of Guru Chos-dbang_ (_Gu-ru Chos-dbang Kyi gTer-'byung Chen-mo_, (manuscript copy kindly made available to me by Tulku Thondup Rinpoche), p.133., indicates that the PBD was one of the first eighteen major treasure discoveries of Guru Chos-dbang, but does not indicate the details of the discovery.

sufficient for the purposes of the present study to take the text as we have it contained in the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma as the basis of the study. There may be some doubt as to whether the PBD underwent any serious changes at the hands of manuscript copiers between the time of Guru Chos-dbang and Ratna gLing-pa. Scribal errors are not uncommon in the transmission of Tibetan manuscripts. These errors tend to be limited, however, to errors in spelling and not to major reinterpretations of meaning, so it is perhaps safe to say that the principal form of the manuscript remained the same during this time. The colophon informs us that the text was revealed during the snake year, which may be taken in this case to be the year 1257.[22] This

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22 This date can be determined based on the information that Guru Chos-dbang was born in 1212. The PBD, according to the Great Treasure Discoveries of Guru Chos-dbang, p.133, is one of his first major treasure discoveries, which he began to make at the age of 22. If we allow 15 years of contemplation before the unveiling of the teaching this brings us to the year 1249. The next snake year after 1249 is 1257. It is also possible that the text was revealed in the snake year 1269, one year before Guru Chos-dbang's death. It is noteworthy that sNang-don Dad-seng reports that he wrote the PBD down in the snake year. If Guru Chos-dbang discovered the text fifteen years before revealing it it would have been discovered in the tiger year -- which contradicts the prediction in the colophon that the text would be uncovered in the snake year. This would indicate that the writing down of the text by sNang-don Dad-seng -- rather than the uncovering by Guru Chos-dbang -- is the revealing of the text predicted in the colophon. This may also strengthen the supposition that it is sNang-don Dad-seng himself who is the true author of the PBD, though he was guided by Guru Chos-dbang in his composition. See Eva Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.103-119, and Khetsun Sangpo, Biographical Dictionary of Tibet, (Dharmasala, H.P., India:

is the earliest date that may safely be given to the PBD, as the exact nature of the teaching handed down from the Indian masters to Padmasambhava cannot be determined.

The authority of the PBD does not come from its being taught by the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. In fact the text itself states that "The teachers of the past, such as Śākyamuni did not teach the eighty four thousand [Dharmas], including the nine vehicles, as the sudden penetration of awareness in order to remedy the obscurations of the six classes [of living beings]."[23] Another passage states:

> I, the great Dor-rje 'Chang, the personal intuition of self-awareness, teach what has not been taught previously or by another, the meaning which does not depend on hearing, thinking, or meditating, the Dharma of little toil and of ease in understanding the great meaning, that which teaches the sudden penetration of the Dharmakāya of self-awareness (rang-rig-chos-sku), which all inferior minds realize by the mere teaching, which is the great essential meaning of all

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Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1973), p.37.

23 PBD, p.9. The six classes of sentient beings are: 1) Gods, 2) Asuras, 3) Humans, 4) Animals, 5) Hungry ghosts, and 6) Hell beings. See Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, pp.55-74.

> the Dharmas, which is the root of all the vehicles of samsara and nirvana, which is the unification of transmission, sutra, and sacred instruction, the essence of the Tantra, the sudden penetration of self-awareness, the condensed meaning which severs extremes and severs reification.[24]

The PBD, therefore, actually teaches a doctrine that it claims was not taught by the historical Buddha.

Can a text which openly admits to hold a teaching not proclaimed by the historical Buddha be a Buddhist text? The answer will depend on the perspective of the person in question. The Theravāda tradition of Buddhism holds that the Buddha was a historical personage who gained enlightenment, taught, and passed away into nirvana. For this tradition only the teachings given or authorized by this historical Buddha can be considered orthodox.[25] In the Mahāyāna tradition there are believed to be innumerable Buddhas, the Buddha Sakyamuni being only one among them. The teachings of any of these Buddhas could therefore be

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[24] PBD, p.10.

[25] See Janet Gyatso, "Signs, Memory, and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission," Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Madison), pp.7-31. See especially pp.9-11.

considered orthodox.[26] The Vajrayana also upholds the tradition of innumerable Buddhas, but introduces the idea of an ādibuddha or supreme Buddha that is thought to represent the quintessential reality of all Buddhahood. This adibuddha is referred to in the rNying-ma tradition as Samanthabhadra or the All Good. The PBD claims that this Samanthabhadra is none other than rDo-rje 'Chang himself.[27] In the view of Vajrayāna Buddhism the teachings given by the adibuddha are most authoritative, for they are thought to come from the highest principle of Buddhahood, and it is this authority that the PBD claims. From this perspective it is only unfortunate that the historical Buddha did not promulgate the teaching which rDo-rje 'Chang presents in the PBD; it is no cause for questioning the authority of the teaching.

From a scholarly point of view there is little reason to enter the controversy of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy. It should suffice that a text such as the PBD is held to be authoritative by a tradition of Buddhism. The investigation of such a text will only lead to a deeper understanding of the branch of Buddhism that it represents.

Transmission of the PBD

It will be useful at this point to briefly discuss the

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26 *Ibid*.

27 PBD, p.24.

lives of the holders of the transmission as presented by the text. At the opening of the PBD we are told that rDo-rje 'Chang is the actual intuition of self-awareness, the body of wisdom, the principle of Buddhahood as represented by the three kāyas. Yet in the thirty eighth-chapter of the tantra we are given a short biography of Dorje Chang. This passage is so unusual that it is worth quoting in full:

> Then again the Lord of Secrets addressed [rDo-rje 'Chang]:
>
> The three kāyas are unhindered compassion, so how do they enact the purpose of living beings?'
>
> The Teacher gave instruction:
>
> Son of Noble Family, I was born as a child who had reached the age of eight years. Then for a period of eight years I turned the wheel of the five wisdoms at the life-tree of profound knowledge. By intuition I was liberated, I was put into the true inspiration.
>
> Then, during the first eight years, I came forth as many emanations (Nirmana) and worked the purpose [of living beings].
>
> I removed the torment of suffering for the first retinues [in] the abode of gods. I

strung a silk thread with a rosary of pearls, then turned the wheel to the outside. In order to liberate others by compassion I was inspired in the meaning of enigmas (ldem-po)[28] and explained the ordinary vehicles.

Then again at the peak of the Burning Fire Mountain I saw with certainty the truth of the Buddha. I explained the dharmas of empty appearance (snang-ba-stong-pa'i-chos).

Then at the Vulture Mountain the Great Tantras, secret and fabulous, were released from [my] Mind (thugs). [They were] wrapped in the vessel of my throat, stretched out on the lotus of my tongue, and scattered forth by the consciousness with the quality of five aspects. I explained the Cuckoo of Awareness[29] in a melodious voice possessing the sixty branches [of a Buddha's voice]. I cut off the doubts and reifications of the

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28 This refers to the distinction between definitive meaning (nges-don) and interpretable meaning (drang-don). Enigmas in this case are interpretable presentations of the teaching, rather than direct and certain explanations.

29 Rig-pa'i Khu-byug. This is a short text of six lines. The text has been studied by Samten Karmay in his article "The Rdzogs-chen in its Earliest Text: A Manuscript from Tun-huang," B.N. Aziz and M. Kapstein (eds.) Soundings in Tibetan Civilization (New Delhi: Manohar, 1985), pp.272-282.

retinue's minds (blo).

In my twenty forth year, at my nirvana, I explained the three aspects of my will (zhal-chems). For the purpose of followers I explained the Unreified Clear Meaning, secondly the One Knowledge Total Liberation (gCig-shes Kun-grol)[30], and thirdly the Total Gathering of Precious Jewels (Rin-chen Kun-'dus).[31] I put them down for the purpose of my followers, those who are without the fortune of meeting with me.

I likewise put down the reliquary of the three kāyas. Then I [entered] complete nirvana.

Speak these words for the sake of the future!"

Thus he spoke.

From the Great Tantra of Unreified Clear Meaning this is the thirty eighth chapter which teaches the manner of the Nirmāṇakāya's

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30 This text is mentioned in the hagiography of Guru Chos-dbang translated by Eva Dargyay (Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.110), where he reads the text to his father. It is not clear, however, whether this text was discovered by Guru Chos-dbang or by another. I have been unable to locate any extant copy of the text itself.

31 It has not been possible to locate this text or to determine whether or not it is still extant.

enacting the purpose [of living beings].[32]

This short "autobiography" does not inform us of the time or place that rDo-rje 'Chang was born or give us any historically sound information as to his life. The story has the character of many hagiographies of Siddhas or accomplished adepts of the Vajrayāna tradition,[33] yet differs in that rDo-rje 'Chang did not undergo any process of spiritual training and does not report any contact with a teacher of any kind. It is significant that this biography, found in the PBD, states that the PBD was taught just before rDo-rje 'Chang entered complete nirvana, indicating that the present exposition of the PBD was preached after this complete nirvana. This opens the question of whether this biography is in fact one of the fragments mentioned in the colophon, for if it were an inherent part of the PBD it could not mention the PBD as having been taught in the past. The biography also does not mention the retinues which rDo-rje 'Chang taught or the names of any of his students. It is in the opening passage and colophon of the text that this information is found.

Although this biography of rDo-rje 'Chang might lead

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[32] PBD, p.78ff.

[33] See e.g. Abhayadatta, Buddha's Lions, The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas, translated by James Robinson, (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1979).

the reader to believe that he was at some point a human being, it is generally held by the tradition the dGa'-rab rDo-rje was the first human transmitter of the Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen) teachings.[34] dGa-rab rDo-rje is held by the PBD as the redactor of its teachings and the first one to write them down. Eva Dargyay in the Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet has compiled a brief biography of dGa'-rab rDo-rje which reads as follows:

> The Lord of Secrets (gSang-ba'i-bdag-po) instructed the Holders of Wisdom (Rig-'dsin) in Dhanakośa in Uḍḍiyāna, the contemporary Swat valley. There was a large temple, called bDe-byed-brtsegs-pa; it was surrounded by 1608 smaller chapels. King Uparāja, and Queen sNang-ba-gsal-ba'i-'od-ldan-ma resided there. They had a daughter called Sudharmā; she took the novice vows, and soon afterwards the full monastic vows. Sudharmā, together with her maidens, stayed on an island and meditated about the Yoga Tantra (rnal-'byor-gyi-rgyud). One night the Bhikṣuṇī Sudharmā dreamed that a white man had come, who was utterly pure and beautiful. He held a crystal vessel which had the letters oṃ ā

34 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.19.

hūṃ svāhā engraved upon it. Three times he set the vessel upon the crown of her head, and light then shone from it. While this happened, she beheld the threefold world perfectly and clearly. Not long after this dream the Bhikṣuṇī gave birth to a true son of the gods. She, however, was very ashamed and thus had bad thoughts: "Since the child was born without a father the whole world will regard it as a spectre." Thereupon she decided to throw the infant boy on the dust-heap. But light and music sprang from the heap; when this continued for three days and the child had not yet died, the Bhikṣuṇī believed the infant an incarnation (sPrul-pa) and took him back into the house. All the gods and spirits came to pay respect to the infant and offer gifts to him. When the boy was seven years old he asked his mother to be allowed to dispute with the Paṇḍits, the scholars. The mother rejected his request because of his tender age. However, after he had repeated his request, he stepped in front of the five hundred scholars, who were guests at the royal court; and conquered them all in the disputation. Prostrate on their knees,

now the scholars honoured the boy and gave him the name Prajñābhava, "The One Whose Being is Wisdom." The king, who was very pleased with this occurrence, gave him the name sLob-dpon dGa'-rab rDo-rje; under this name he became famous. Because his mother had once thrown him on the dust-heap, he was also known as Ro-langs-bde-ba or Ro-langs-thal-mdog, "Who rose Happy from the Dust" or "The Ashy-pale One who rose from the Dust." In terrible mountain ranges and solitudes where the hungry spirits (Preta) appear in hordes, he meditated for thirty-two years. When the earth trembled seven times, the heretic and infidel mKha'-'gro-ma called: "He injures the Hindu belief!" The Hindu king then wanted to hold dGa'-rab-rdo-rje responsible, but the latter ascended into space. Because of this event the king and his entourage became very religious.

After these ascetic exercises, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje knew the exoteric and the esoteric path, and most of all, the sixty-four by a hundred thousand verses of the rDzogs-chen. rDo-rje-sems-dpa', the Being of Unchangeability, whose emanation dGa'-rab-rdo-

rje was, now gave him in addition a special empowerment (dbang-bskur). Together with the three mKha'-'gro-ma he compiled an index (dkar-chags) of the sixty-four by a hundred thousand rDzogs-chen verses; this task took three years. After that he went to the cremation ground Śītavana, where many frightful creatures lived.[35]

It is at this point in dGa'-rab rDo-rje's life that he comes into contact with 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen, the next holder of the lineage of the PBD. The account in The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet continues as follows:

> Mañjuśri gave 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen the following prophecy: "If you want to attain Buddhahood go to the cremation ground Śītavana!" 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen followed this advice, and met dGa'-rab-rdo-rje there. For seventy-five years 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen listened to dGa'-rab-rdo-rje's instructions in the Dharma. After having given all traditions to 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen, dGa'-rab-rdo-rje died. At the death ceremony the

35 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.19-20. For another account of dGa'-rab rDo-rje's life with slight variations see Tarthang Tulku, Crystal Mirror Vol. V, (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1971, pp.182-186.

> Teacher dGa'-rab-rdo-rje appeared in the middle of a mass of light, surrounded by Spiritual Beings (<u>mKha'-'gro-ma</u>). He handed 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen a golden box which contained the <u>rDzogs-chen</u> verses. He divided these sixty-four by a hundred thousand verses into the Three Sections of the rDzogs-pa-chen-po. . . .[36]

It is not possible to ascertain the degree of historical truth that lies behind these stories, yet they are useful in providing an insight into the Buddhist tradition's view of the holders of the lineage of teaching. Eva Dargyay has proposed the year 52 C.E. for dGa'-rab rDo-rje,[37] while Tarthang Tulku proposes the year 55 C.E. for his birth.[38] A.W. Hanson-Barber argues that this date is too early and suggests 550 C.E. as a more suitable date for him.[39] Hanson-Barber's methods in reaching this date do not appear to be entirely sound,[40] while the first century dating

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36 Dargyay, <u>Esoteric Buddhism</u>, p.21.

37 Dargyay, <u>Esoteric Buddhism</u>, p.245.

38 Tarthang Tulku, <u>Crystal Mirror</u>, p.182.

39 A.W. Hansen-Barber, "The Identification of dGa' rab rdo rje," <u>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</u>, (Madison) Vol. 9 no. 2. 1986. p.55-63.

40 There are two main weaknesses to Hansen-Barber's argument. First, he uses a standard of thirty-five year spacings between each master and student. It is possible that a master be thirty-five years older than his student,

of dGa'-rab rDo-rje accords with the accounts provided by the Buddhist tradition itself. For this reason it is preferable to accept the approximate year of 55 C.E. until further evidence becomes available.

Our information concerning 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen is even less extensive than that on dGa'-rab rDo-rje. Tarthang Tulku reports that he came from a village just west of Vajrāsana in India and was a Brahman known as sNying-po Grub-pa. He was an expert in Sanskrit, linguistics, philosophy, logic, and art. On account of his wide knowledge he was also known as 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen (Mañjuśrimītra). Tarthang Tulku's account then reports the same events quoted above about his meeting with dGa'-rab rDo-rje.[41] Eva Dargyay places 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen's death in the year 342 C.E.[42]

'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen's student was Śrī Siṃha. A short biography of his life is found in Eva Dargyay's Rise of Esoteric Buddhism is Tibet. It reads as follows:

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but it is also possible -- and more likely -- that the difference be greater or lesser, perhaps very much so. Secondly, Hansen-Barber invents two holders of the lineage which the tradition does not know of. These are a second Vimalamitra and an unknown person Hanson-Barber does not propose to identify. He ascribes thirty-five year intervals for these two "lineage holders" in order to support his dating of dGa'-rab rDo-rje in the sixth century. See Hansen-Barber, Ibid.

41 Tarthang Tulku, Crystal Mirror, p.186.

42 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.245.

In China in the town So-khyam, a son full of the preferences and gifts was born to a virtuous father and his wife who were of clear intellect; this son was the Teacher Śrīsiṃha. At the age of fifteen he studied grammar and logic and the other usual disciplines with the master Haribhala. When, after three years, he had become a great scholar, one night in the town of gSer-gling <u>Avalokiteśvara</u> appeared to him and prophesied: "If you really aspire for the Buddhahood, then go to India to the cremation ground So-sa-gling!" The Teacher Śrīsiṃha put his trust in this word. Since he thought that the other Tantra should also be studied, he went to the Wu-tai-shan, and there he studied the exoteric and the esoteric Tantra with the Teacher Bhelakīrti. Śrīsiṃha took the vows of a monk, and for three years practiced asceticism according to the <u>Vinaya</u>-system (i.e. rules for the conduct of monks). Admonished by a prophecy repeatedly given by <u>Avalokiteśvara</u>, he set out to India. Because of his spiritual potency (<u>siddhi</u>) he encountered no pain and hardship on the way.

> Thus he came safe and sound to the cremation ground So-sa-gling, where he met the great Teacher 'Jam-dpal-bśes-gnyen, who, because of Śrīsiṃha's entreaties, accepted him as a student. For twenty-five years the Teacher gave him the instructions and subcommentaries belonging to it, till finally the master dissolved in a mass of light. When Śrīsiṃha was engaged with the death lamentations, the form of the master appeared in the sky and instructed him bodily. He gave Śrīsiṃha a little box made of jewels, which contained the Six Meditation Experiences (sGom-nyams-drug-pa). After the death of his master, Śrīsiṃha practiced this doctrine and realized the absolutely real (don-gyi-gding).[43]

At this point in Śrī Simha's story other characters become involved that do not immediately concern us. Śrī Simha returned to China. He was invited to Khotan (Li-yul) at a latter date and died there after one week's stay.[44] His main students were Vimalamitra and Jñānasūtra.[45]

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[43] Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.22. For a slightly longer account of his life see Tarthang Tulku, Crystal Mirror, p.188-191.

[44] See Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, pp.24-5.

[45] Ibid., p.27.

Tarthang Tulku places Śrī Simha's birth in the year 289 C.E.,[46] while Eva Dargyay remains uncommitted on a date.[47]

The colophon of the PBD reports that Śrī Simha taught the text to Padmasambhava, who was the one to bring this teaching to Tibet. Padmasambhava is a figure of outstanding importance in the history of Buddhism in Tibet, for it is he who is believed to be responsible for the success of Buddhism in that country.[48] Unlike the previous gurus, for which we have only scanty biographical information, there are many volumes in Tibetan literature devoted to his life.[49] These works are much too lengthy to be included in the present study. What is important for the present purpose is to note that Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet during the reign of Khri-srong lDe-btsan (reigned 755-97)[50] and was instrumental in establishing Buddhism there. It is believed

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46 Tarthang Tulku, Crystal Mirror, p.188.

47 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.245.

48 See e.g. Tarthang Tulku, Crystal Mirror, p.140ff.

49 The following are some of the more well known biographies of Padmasambhava: The bKa'-thaṅ Sel-brag-ma by U-rgyan gLing-pa, the Padma gLing-pa bKa'-thaṅ Mun-sel sGron-me by Padma gLingpa, and the Padma bKa'-thaṅ Yig Ga'u Ma by sNang-'chan Rin-chen-dpal. U-rgyan gLing-pa's biography of Padmasambhava was translated into French by Gustave-Charles Toussaint as Le Dict de Padma, (Paris: Librarire Ernest Leroux, 1933), and translated from the French into English by Kenneth Douglas and Gwendolyn Bays as The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava, (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1978) 2 Vols.

50 These dates supplied by Shakabpa, Tibet, A Political History, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p.34.

by the Tibetans that during his stay in Tibet he not only taught various students about Buddhism but hid many teachings throughout Tibet under the earth, in rocks, in temples, in rivers and lakes, in the sky, etc.[51] These hidden teachings are known as "treasures" (gter-ma). The PBD is one such treasure.

Padmasambhava is known to have studied under a certain 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen the Younger, who is believed to be the reincarnation of the 'Jam-dpal bShes-gnyen mentioned above.[52] He is not known to have studied with Śrī Simha in any of the traditional accounts.[53] There is an account which states that Padmasambhava taught Śrī Simha. This account is taken by Eva Dargyay as unreliable in light of the existing accounts of the principal transmission of the rDzogs-chen.[54]

The fact that there is no direct connection between Padmasambhava and Śrī Simha in the reliable existing accounts does not mean that such a connection is impossible. It is a common feature of the teachings of the Vajrayāna that they may be handed down in encounters of "pure vision" (dag-snang). This means that a disciple can receive teaching from a master long dead in a direct spiritual

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[51] See Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Hidden Teachings, p.58.

[52] Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.27.

[53] See Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.27.

[54] Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.55.

encounter.[55] Such transmissions are not rejected by the tradition, but rather are taken very seriously. The colophon of the PBD does not state that it was received by Padmasambhava in this way, but by interpreting the transmission in this way we are able to explain a transmission that otherwise must be considered inauthentic.

As the colophon informs us, Padmasambhava hid the PBD, or at least the "yellow scroll" which was the seed of the PBD, during his stay in Tibet in the eighth century C.E. Guru Chos-dbang discovered this teaching and taught it to his disciple sNang-don Dad-seng, who wrote it down. Thus there was a gap of about four hundred fifty years between the hiding of the PBD and its discovery.

Guru Chos-dbang was a very famous transmitter of the teachings of the rNying-ma school, and is known as the second great Discoverer-King.[56] Eva Dargyay in her Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet has translated a biography of Guru Chos-dbang,, too lengthy to be quoted in full here.[57] There also exists a full biography of him that remains to be

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55 There are numerous accounts of such encounters. For an example see Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.48. For a brief discussion of this type of spiritual transmission see Gyatso, "Signs, Memory and History,," p.10. See also Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Secret Teachings, p.90.

56 See Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.104.

57 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, pp.103-119.

studied.[58] For the present I shall give a brief synopsis of his life.

Guru Chos-dbang was born in the year 1212.[59] His birth was attended by various miraculous signs. He received an intensive education from a young age in literature, history, and religious traditions. At the age of thirteen he had a spiritual vision in which he encountered Tārā, Vajrasattva, and a Ḍākinī. He continued to receive large numbers of important teachings and transmissions until the age of twenty-two, at which time he began to make discoveries of treasures or hidden teachings. He revealed eighteen major treasures and numerous minor treasures. He prophesied the Mongol invasion of Tibet, a prophecy which in fact came to pass in the year 1239.[60] Guru Chos-dbang not only revealed many hidden treasures, he wrote copiously on many aspects of Buddhist religion. He died in the year 1270.

Guru Chos-dbang is known to have had eight "spiritual sons,"[61] yet the name of sNang-don Dad-seng does not appear among them. The identity and life of sNang-don Dad-seng must remain unknown until relevant materials come to light.

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58 The Autobiography and Instructions of Gu-ru Chos-kyi dBang-phyug, (Kyichu Temple, Paro, Bhutan: Ugyen Tempai Gyaltsen, 1979). Two volumes.

59 Dates according to Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.103.

60 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.112.

61 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, p.118.

There is no further information on the transmission of the PBD until its collection in the _Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma_ by Ratna gLing-pa (1403-1479).[62] Ratna gLing-pa was a treasure finder himself, and the compiler of the great collection of rNying-ma tantras. With regard to his compilation of the rNying-ma Tantras Eva Dargyay has presented the following account.

> The lDan-dkar-ma Catalogue of the Kanjur states that the esoteric Tantras of the Vajrayāna (_gsang-sngags nang-rgyud_) were not included because they were dangerous [if studied by non-qualified persons]. The transmission of these books (_dpe_) and their oral tradition (_lung_) had become very scarce and precious because the Old Tantras of the First Period of Translations (_snga-'gyur rnying-ma'i-rgyud_) were not taken into the collection of the Kanjur (_bKa'-'gyur_). With great enthusiasm Ratna-gling-pa earnestly searched for these books and the oral traditions in all directions of the compass. Finally he found the main bulk of the One-Hundred-Thousand Tantras (_rGyud-'bum_) at Zur-'ug-pa-lung. He knew that in Khams, dBus, or

62 Dates according to Dargyay, _Esoteric Buddhism_, p.144.

gTsang the complete oral tradition was not handed down to anybody with the exception of Mes-sgom-gtan-bzang-po in gTsang. He could not imagine that this oral tradition was to be interrupted so soon. The master Mes-sgom, in spite of his old age, taught and gave him the instructions, showing great zeal in doing so for a long time.

Later on, Ratna-gling-pa compiled the One-Hundred-Thousand Tantras (rGyud-'bum) in a single collection at the Lhun-grub-pho-brang [palace] in Gru-sul. At first he wrote it in Indian ink but later on in golden tincture. Thereupon he did much for the dissemination of this oral tradition. Thanks to Ratna-gling-pa, the gracious and great Discover of Concealed Treasures, even today the Tantras of the Vajrayāna (gsang-sngags-rgyud) are available for the use of everybody like a wish-bestowing jewel (cintamani). He was exceedingly useful to the whole rNying-ma-pa Doctrine.[63]

This passage shows that the teachings of the rNying-ma tantras had almost fully declined at the time of Ratna

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63 Dargyay, Esoteric Buddhism, pp.145-146.

gLing-pa. He was able to find only one holder of the transmissions in all of Tibet. It is not known whether Ratna gLing-pa edited the materials he compiled into the Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma or if he preserved them just as he found them. It is nonetheless due to the efforts of Ratna gLing-pa that the PBD exists in the present world and is available for study.

The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma has been handed down since the time of Ratna gLing-pa and exists in several editions and copies.[64] The PBD is found in all known copies of this collection.

There are no known commentaries on the PBD. References to the PBD are also lacking in the available historical accounts of the transmission of Buddhism in Tibet. The present study is perhaps the first exploration of the PBD in letters since the time of Ratna gLing-pa.

Contents

The PBD contains two hundred ninty-six pages. These are divided into one hundred twenty-three chapters. The chapter titles are recorded in the colophons of each chapter. The chapter titles are as follows:

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2. The general meaning and its content (p.9).
3. The way of being of the Base (p.12).

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64 See this thesis, p.1, note 1.

4. The existential mode of the Base and the Great Appearance of the Base (p.15).
5. The particulars of the Base (p.18).
6. The similes that exemplify the Base (p.19).
7. The way of Being of the Base and entities, and the recognition of the word which symbolizes the mode of appearance (p.22).
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15. The words for "ornament" and "play" in brief (p.39).
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17. Teaches that in the pure Base there is no delusion and teaches the three bases for delusion in the appearance of quality (p.41).
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53. The view and its application (p.124).
54. The view in detail (p.126).
55. The grasping of the one view in one life (p.138).
56. The view, meditation, and practice combined into one (p.142).
57. The final settlement of the view (p.144).
58. The joining with existence and absence in meditation, and the continual samadhi for average minds together with its defining characteristics (p.147).
59. The inspiration that teaches content and lack of content in meditation and the means of meditation in detail (p.152).
60. The applied theory of meditation (p.157).
61. The grounds for error in meditation (p.158).
62. The cutting off of the grounds for error in meditation (p.160).
63. The practice in condensed form (p.175).
64. The sacred instructions of applying equally the theory of religions practice to itself during the four times (p.178).
65. The practice of the joining in equality of the three times (p.179).
66. The eighteen spheres of activity of Māra (p.180).

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

The following chapters of this thesis consist of a thematic study of the most important topics in the PBD. The PBD is a text attempting to comprehend every aspect of its view of the Buddhology it represents. To present a full analysis of every topic in the PBD would require nothing less than an interlinear commentary and concordance of the entire text, a task that could well extend into thousands of pages. For this reason I have focused on the principal subjects necessary for a comprehension of the PBD's teachings, those topics presented repeatedly and extensively throughout the text. The PBD presents many secondary topics, often cryptically and incompletely. These topics I have alluded to, but not discussed in detail.

The following chapters therefore consist of an analysis of the PBD's views on 1) The Base, 2) Delusion, 3) The Buddha-kaya, 4) Wisdom, 5) The path, 6) Recognition, and 7) The Atiyoga. It would certainly be desirable to discuss the

relationship the ideas presented in the PBD have to various other views of reality, such as the different Buddhist schools of thought and the mystical literature of the world. Such an enterprise would again require detailed analysis amounting to a full thesis for each topic covered. My goal in presenting this information is to provide as comprehensive a view as possible of a text that is an important representation of esoteric Buddhism in general, and its thirteenth century manifestation in particular. I assume my reader to be familiar with the fundamental concepts of the Buddhist tradition, and assume that he or she is able to draw conclusions on the import of the information I provide on his or her own part.

It has not been my concern to ascertain the truth or falsity of the information contained in the PBD. I have striven, rather, to provide the reader with an insight into the thought of the PBD as accurately as possible, without prejudice as to its greatness in or lack of spiritual value. This information should provide the reader with an accurate insight into the theories and outlook of one of the greatest movements in esoteric Buddhism, the Great Perfection (rdzogs-chen) vehicle.

This study represents the first time the PBD has come to the attention of modern scholarship. There are no translations of the PBD available. For this reason it has been necessary to quote extensively from the text in order

to provide an accurate picture of the text itself. I have augmented these quotations from the text with clarifying remarks and footnotes, yet often I have allowed the text to speak for itself. I have striven to pick out the most appropriate quotations from the PBD to express the subject at hand and have provided commentary and analysis in order to make these points more lucid to my reader.

All translations in this thesis, unless otherwise noted, are my own. In preparation for this thesis I have prepared a preliminary translation of the entire text. Dr. Eva Dargyay has kindly read this manuscript in comparison with the original Tibetan text. She has offered many useful comments and much good advice on technical points. This advice has been very helpful in arriving at suitable translations for technical terms and identifying important passages. The translations presented are nonetheless my own. Any error or misunderstanding perpetrated by these translations is my own responsibility, though the reader can be sure that I have made every attempt to present the text in as accurate and meaningful a form as possible.

The methodology of my translation represents an effort to avoid the two extremes of over-literalness in translation and over-interpretiveness in translation. This means that I have striven to render the Tibetan both accurately and succinctly. In avoiding over-literalness I have striven to present my translations so that an educated speaker of

English can readily make sense of the words I use. In avoiding over-interpretive translation I have striven to use the simplest terms possible to render Tibetan vocabulary items.

An example of what I consider over-interpretive translation is found in Kennard Lipman's translation entitled Primordial Experience, where he translates the Tibetan term rig-pa as "the flash of knowing that gives awareness its quality."[1] This method renders a single Tibetan word into nine English words. When numerous technical terms are found together in a text the resulting overabundance of words in English can easily turn a single sentence into a long paragraph. I have translated the term rig-pa simply as "awareness." I believe this word to be understandable to my reader, and rely on the contexts in which it is found to elucidate its more subtle meanings. The text itself often strives to give meaning to the technical terms it uses, and it is the context of the text itself that gives meaning to the contents, rather than the speculations at interpretation in the translator's mind. For this reason I have opted for simplicity in expression with the intention of providing directly accessible translations that are at the same time intelligible and

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1. Manjusrimitra, Primordial Experience, trans. Namkhai Norbu and Kennard Lipman, (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), p.xxiii.

readable.

The thematic analysis of the PBD now follows. The colophon of the PBD, as quoted above,[2] makes prophesies that "some will cover it with the darkness of commentary. Some will block it with the claw of interpretation. Some will poison it with the content stomach of scriptural quotation." I have made every attempt not to fulfill this prophesy in the present study. I hope that I have elucidated the meaning of the PBD for the English speaking world rather than darkened it in any way.

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2. See this thesis, p.14.

CHAPTER 3

The Base

It has already been noted in the opening passage of this thesis that the PBD uses positive language to discuss the ultimate reality.[1] The PBD uses a large number of terms in relation to the ultimate reality (don-dam), despite the fact that the Buddhist tradition, and the PBD itself, claim that the ultimate reality is unspeakable and beyond cognition.[2] The PBD explains its use of such terminology in the following succinct statement:

> [The Base (gzhi)] is unspeakable and inconceivable, yet there is no perfectly pure meaning other than this, so it must be

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1. This thesis, p.2.

2. See e.g. Śantideva, Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra, chapter nine, verse 2, where it proclaims that "The ultimate reality is not the province of the mind" (don-dam-blo-yi-spyod-yul-min). See also PBD, p.24.

spoken! It must be known![3]

This quotation not only points out the PBD's willingness to use positive language to describe the ultimate, it brings us directly to the most fundamental term the PBD uses in relation to ultimate reality, the Base (gzhi). There is a deep inter-relationship between all the terms the PBD uses on the ultimate level, and an understanding of one most often depends upon an understanding of the others. It is, however, necessary to enter into the system at some point, and the PBD itself uses the Base as its own starting point in this discussion.[4]

The PBD describes the Base both negatively, describing what it is not, and positively, describing what it is. I will first present the passages that describe the Base positively:

> Before the realized intuition (rtogs) and delusion ('khrul) of samsara and nirvana it transcended both cause and condition, so it is self-arisen.[5]
>
> It is non-dual equilibrium, creating no good or evil anywhere.[6]

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3. PBD, p.24.

4. PBD, chapters three through eight.

5. PBD, p.13.

6. PBD, p.14.

The uncontrived is the Base, so it is the matrix of all that is spontaneously realized and self-arising. It is the vital essence of the unadulterated, the all encompassing meaning.[7]

It is the uncontrived mind of perfect purity (<u>byang-chub-sems</u>), self-abiding in its own way of being, the primeval spontaneously realized treasury of all precious things.[8]

It is the essence of meaning of all the Dharmas of samsara and nirvana. Its arising is that it arises from the dimension of wisdom. It is the dimension endowed with awareness.[9]

The essential reality (<u>ngo-bo</u>) of the Base is non-duality. The definition is that because it is the matrix of all things it is the Base. Furthermore it is the support (<u>rten</u>) of both samsara and nirvana.[10]

[The Base] cleanses matter because it is subsumed under "awareness" which is cleansed

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7. PBD, p.14.

8. PBD, p.16.

9. PBD, p.17.

10. PBD, p.18.

of all other things. It is cleansed of entities because it exists in the empty (stong-par-'dug-pa). It cleanses the appearance of duality, for it is without duality. It cleanses causes and conditions, for it is self-arising. It cleanses hopes and fears, for it is spontaneously realized. It cleanses defilements, for it is perfectly pure.[11]

It is liberated from the conventionalities of samsara and nirvāna, so it is the Dharmakāya.[12]

There is nothing above it, so it is great. Nothing is previous to it, so it is primordial. Everything arises from and appears from it, so it is the Creator of All (kun-byed). All of samsara and nirvana appear from it, so it is the Base.[13]

It transcends cause and condition; it is self-arising. It did not appear adventitiously, and it is the identity (bdag-nyid) of the primordially existent awareness

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11. PBD, p.19.

12. PBD, p.23.

13. PBD, p.23.

(*ye-nas-gnas-pa'i-rig-pa*). So it is wisdom.[14]

It transcends the enumeration of Rūpakāya Buddhas, and everything arises and comes forth from realized intuition of its meaning. So it is the Ancestor (*mes-po*) of all Buddhas.[15]

Its own essential nature is undefiled, and it is clearly the unhindered great self-luminescence of wisdom. Thus it is above all things, and it is the unchanging self-appearance and self-aspect of awareness. So it is the highest Buddha, Unchanging Light (*'Od Mi-'gyur-ba*).[16]

All samsara and nirvana arise from it and touch upon it, so it is the root.[17]

Everything is born from and connected with this great Base, so it is the seed.[18]

It is certain that the essential nature of the Base is the self-arising clear and empty.

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14. PBD, p.22.

15. PBD, p.24.

16. PBD, p.24.

17. PBD, p.25.

18. PBD, p.25.

> There is no difference between the arising and non-arising of certain knowledge [with regard to it].[19]

These passages can be summarized by noting that the Base is the fundamental ground of being of all reality, both conditioned reality (samsāra) and transcendent reality (nirvana). It is temporally antecedent to all manifestations of reality in that it exists prior to any such manifestation. It is also the ground from which all reality arises. In this sense it is the creator of all reality (kun-byed).[20] It is the ultimate principle of being and is identified with pure awareness (rig-pa). Thus from the perspective of experience it can be said to arise from wisdom (ye-shes), as wisdom is the direct intuition of pure awareness itself. Yet it does not depend in any way on the personal intuition or analysis of anyone, it preceding even the Rūpakāya Buddhas.[21] It is, in fact, the highest principle of Buddhahood itself, whether this is termed the

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19. PBD, p.28.

20. For a discussion of the term kun-byed and an analysis of the ultimate principle as a creator of all reality see Eva Dargyay,, "The Concept of a 'Creator God' in Tantric Buddhism," The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, (Madison), Vol. 8, Number 1, 1985. p.31-48.

21. Rupakaya Buddhas are Buddhas manifesting at the level of the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. A discussion of these terms is found in this thesis, p.90.

Dharmakāya,[22] the highest Buddha Unchanging Light, or the state of enlightened awareness itself -- referred to as the mind of perfect purity (byang-chub-kyi-sems). It is also the ancestor of all Buddhas in that the fundamental state of pure awareness is the ground from which all Buddhas spring forth.

These descriptions of the Base may lead the reader to reify it, thinking that the Base is something truly existent. The PBD is very careful not to posit such a view, holding that the Base is beyond "the four extremes," which are existence, non-existence, both, and neither.[23] That is to say that the Base is not an entity whose existence can be verified, but is rather the essential nature of reality whose existence can neither be divorced from reality nor equated with it. The Base is itself the ontological substratum yet is beyond definition, and cannot be grasped as an object of the mind.

To gain an insight into these points the PBD's negative descriptions of the Base must also be examined:

> It did not arise from the compassion of the Sugatas. It was not born from the karma of sentient beings. It was not born from the five external elements. It is not realized

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22. The Dharmakaya is discussed in this thesis, p.90ff.

23. PBD, p.17.

through the inner discursive conceptualizations (rnam-rtog). It is not affected by an individual's path-wise attitude.[24]

It has no designation of name or mark (mtshan-ma). It has no knowing, no realized intuition, no ignorance nor delusion. The various conceptualizations of delusion and tendencies (bag-chags) and the dharmas of wisdom, force, appearance and result are not distinguished in the Base, the self-arising way of being [of all reality].[25]

It is not established at time's beginning or end, nor in the past or future. It has nothing whatever to accomplish, to take up or reject, good or bad. It has no limit and no center, no direction or partiality. It is uncontrived, unadulterated essence, remaining in the natural state (gnyug-ma).[26]

It does not hold to any truth or falsity, existence or non-existence, at all.[27]

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24. PBD, p.13.

25. PBD, p.13.

26. PBD, p.14.

27. PBD, p.14.

> It is without thought and without conceptualization, like the pure sky. . . . It has no dwelling or non-dwelling, appearance or emptiness. It has no permanence or cessation, no unity or plurality.[28]
>
> The six classes of sentient beings with their various delusions, the kāya of the Victorious One, the appearance of wisdom, and the different vehicles (theg-pa, Skt. yana), including the nine levels, are not established on the Base, by virtue of existing in the way of entities.[29]
>
> It has no experience, non-experience, no entering it or not entering it. It has no dispersion or non-dispersion. Thus it is not necessary to seek it.[30]
>
> It has no cause at the first. It does not have an entity's cause. It has no conditions at the middle. It has no rival at the end. Thus it is unchanging.[31]

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28. PBD, p.15.

29. PBD, p.15.

30. PBD, p.15.

31. PBD, p.16.

These statements make it clear that the PBD does not hold the Base to be an ontologically verifiable object. The notion that the Base is primordial is elucidated by the statements that the Base is beyond temporal boundaries, whether they be in the past or the future. Thus the statements that the Base precedes all other reality must be understood cognitively rather than historically. That is to say that the "time" which precedes all time both transcends and encompasses the temporal process, and this primordial "time" is the locus of the Base. The Base is also beyond all cognitive processes of the mind, whether they be the notions of existence, non-existence, essence, appearance, abiding, non-abiding, experience, non-experience, etc. The Base has no cause or conditions of any kind.

These statements represent the attempt to speak about the ultimate reality while at the same time prevent false conceptions from arising with regard to it. As a composition in the tradition of mystical Buddhism the PBD cannot, however, avoid some attempt to define and categorize the Base. The tension inherent in speaking of the unspeakable pervades the PBD, and must be accepted from the very beginning in order to appreciate the ideas that it sets forth.

At one point the PBD states: "The limit [of the Base] has not been defined. Knowledge (<u>shes-pa</u>) cannot separate

it into sections."[32] Nonetheless, the PBD divides the Base in two ways. First it makes the distinction between the existential mode ('dug-thsul) of the Base and "the great appearance of the Base" (gzhi-snang-chen-po).[33] Secondly, it divides the Base into three divisions or types.[34]

The PBD defines the existential mode of the Base and the appearance of the Base as the Kāya of Essentiality (ngo-bo-nyid-kyi-sku) and the Appearance of Essentiality (ngo-bo-nyid-kyi-snang-ba),[35] and states that "as a simile, they exist like the sky and the sun."[36] With regard to the Kāya of Essentiality the PBD states the following:

> The Kāya of Essentiality is profound knowledge (shes-rab) which does not fall into partiality. It is unhindered wisdom. It is the spontaneously realized Buddha. It is penetrating and insubstantial. It transcends all the extremes of a creator (byed-pa-po). It is uncontrived, and transcends all the extremes of exaggeration and depreciation.

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32. PBD, p.17.

33. PBD, p.15-18.

34. PBD, p.18.

35. PBD, p.16.

36. PBD, p.16.

> It is unadulterated. It is pure of faulty extremes.[37]

With regard to the Appearance of Essentiality the PBD states:

> The object of the Appearance of Essentiality is the phenomenal dimension (chos-dbyings), the totally pure Buddha field. It has no extreme nor center. It has no above nor below, no cardinal nor secondary direction. It has no plurality nor supporting ground (rten-sa). It is not a material dharma. When pushed, it equalizes the suppression. When lifted, it equalizes the arising. It is brilliantly clear, penetrating, and totally unhindered. It is the unreified dimension, the unchanging space (klong).[38]

The point of this distinction is that although the Base is beyond all duality, from the point of view of phenomenal experience there is an apparent difference between the center of awareness (yul-can) and the objects of awareness (yul). The statement that the Appearance of Essentiality is the phenomenal dimension refers to the appearance of objects

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37. PBD, p.16.

38. PBD, p.16.

to the awareness, while the Kāya of Essentiality refers to the subjective sphere or center of awareness.[39] These two are fundamentally inseparable in that each depends on the other, and the PBD is careful to point out that "The Appearance of Essentiality and the Kaya [of Essentiality] are spoken of and exemplified in this way as two [things], yet according to the highest meaning they are not two."[40]

The three types of Base mentioned in the PBD are: 1) The Total Base of Primordial Meaning (ye-don-kyi-kun-gzhi) which is glossed as "The Base of Total Purity," 2) The Total Base which Gathers the Many Things (sna-tshogs-bsags-pa'i-kun-gzhi) which is glossed as the eight consciousnesses which are mixed with karmic tendencies, and 3) The Total Base which is the Meaning of Existence (gnas-pa-don-kyi-kun-gzhi) which is not glossed.[41]

The PBD provides explanation for only the first of these.[42] This explanation intends to show that the Total Base of Primordial Meaning cannot be identified with anything, whether it be a dharma of the phenomenal world or of the transcendent reality. In particular, the PBD points out that it is free from the eight accumulations of

39. PBD, p.15-19.

40. PBD, p.17.

41. PBD, p.19.

42. PBD, p.19.

consciousness.[43] The text reads as follows:

> It is without increase or decrease, so it is liberated from the Ālayavijñāna (kun-gzhi-rnam-shes). It has no grasping to a self, so it is liberated from the defiled mind (nyon-mongs-pa'i-yid). It has no subject-object duality, so it is liberated from the mental consciousness (yid-kyi-rnam-shes). It has no birth or cessation, so it is liberated from the [sense] consciousnesses of the five doors.[44] Thus it is different [from all of them].[45]

This passages refers to the eight types of consciousness according to the Yogācāra school of Buddhism.[46] The statement that the Base is liberated from the Ālayavijñāna is most significant here, for ālayavijñāna may be literally translated as "The Consciousness of the Base." In the Yogācāra system the Ālayavijñāna is that aspect of consciousness in which karmic traces are stored

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43. PBD, p.19.

44. This refers to consciousnesses of the five senses, i.e. eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, nose-consciousness, and skin-consciousness.

45. PBD, p.19.

46. See Nagao Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-Body (Buddha-kaya)," The Eastern Buddhist, New Series, Vol. VI, No.1, May 1973. p.46.

and which serves as the basic ground from which the other forms of consciousness arise.[47] This passage shows that the PBD makes a fundamental distinction between kun-gzhi as the "Total Base" and kun-gzhi as that aspect of consciousness which gathers information and harbors karmic tendencies. Herbert Guenther elucidates this differentiation clearly:

> Sanskrit ālaya. This is usually translated by "store-house," and since it is said to contain or "store" the experientially initiated potentialities of experience (bag-chags, vasana), the notion of it being a permanent substratum has been created. The dGe-lugs-pa understand by it an "indeterminate cognition" (see Tsong-kha-pa, Collected Works, XVIII 3, fol. 7b); the bKa'-brgyud-pas a pervasive potentiality; and the rNying-ma-pas distinguish between the kun-gzhi (ālaya) as the ground exhausting itself in being the ground and not being behind or over the rest of reality, and the kun-gzhi-rnam-shes (alaya-vijnana) which is the first step in the direction of conceptualization and logical construction.[48]

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47. See Nagao Gadjin, Ibid. Also see Herbert Guenther, The Royal Song of Saraha, (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1973), p.32.

48. Guenther, Ibid, p.32, fn.13. The dGe-lugs-pa, bKa'-

This opens the question of whether the second type of Base mentioned in the PBD, The Total Base which Gathers the Many Things, is in fact the Ālayavijñāna, for it is glossed as the eight gatherings of consciousness, which were just mentioned. The PBD is not clear on this point, yet its statement that this second Base is all eight consciousnesses runs counter to the Yogācāra view which puts the Ālayavijñāna in the eighth or highest position of consciousness.

The third type of Base, The Total Base which is the Meaning of Existence, is neither glossed nor mentioned again in the PBD. An explanation of its significance must await discovery of a related text that discusses these points more fully.

The PBD both holds the Base as the fundamental ground of all being and begins its exposition with a discussion of it. The PBD also identifies the Base with the ultimate principle of Buddhahood. The question of course follows: if the Base is Buddhahood as well as the ground of all reality why are not all living beings already enlightened and beyond delusion? This brings us to the next topic of our analysis of the PBD, the nature of delusion.

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brgyud-pa, and rNying-ma-pa are schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The PBD belongs to the rNying-ma-pa school. See this thesis p.16.

CHAPTER 4

Delusion

At the beginning of chapter seventeen of the PBD the Lord of Secrets requests an explanation for delusion.[1] rDo-rje 'Chang begins his answer with the following statement:

> Son of Noble Family, listen well! The Base is unchanging. It is primordial Buddhahood. It is the Blessed One, the Great rDo-rje 'Chang. Previously it has never been deluded. Presently it is not deluded. It is impossible that it will become deluded even in the future. It is like, for example, the vital essence of the sun having no basis for darkness, or a crystal appearing according to whatever conditions it meets with. It appears by the power of its clarity, yet

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[1] PBD, p.42.

nothing adheres to or covers it.

In the same way the profound knowledge which does not fall into a direction is perfect Buddhahood from the Protective Base (mgon-po-gzhi). It is from the beginning pure (ka-nas-dag) of the delusion of karmic tendencies. Where is the convention of delusion in the undeluded Buddha?

However, this is not realized. Just as there is but one sun, but by the power of perception (mthong-ba) a separate sun for each area appears, so there is but one self-awareness which appears as the plurality of both samsara and nirvana. Just as camphor appears as [both] medicine and poison though there is no division in it between medicine and poison, the non-dual Great Appearance of the Base does not waver from the state of non-duality, but appears by the power of [its] quality. The quality of appearing as plural also becomes deluded, and a quality arises as a fault.[2]

This passage points out that the Base remains the same whether an individual has enlightened awareness or is

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[2] PBD, p.42.

deluded. The Base, conceived of dualistically, can be divided into its essence and its appearance. Both of these are intrinsically pure of all defilement and delusion, yet this is not understood and living beings continue in the state of delusion. In this case the Base, which is the ground of all reality, has become dualistically conceived on account of the defilements of attachment, aversion, etc. The essence of these defilements is the subject-object hypostatization of reality, the essential duality from which all other duality comes forth.

In its opening statements on the Base the PBD proclaims:

> [The Base] becomes obscured by such things as ignorance, perverse views, faithlessness, and laziness, but is free from the faults of the extremes of permanence and cessation, the extremes of existence and non-existence, coarse awareness, and subject-object [duality].[3]

This point has been expressed very clearly by Namkhai Norbu in his exposition of the Great Perfection, <u>The Crystal and the Way of Light</u>:

> It is called the Base because it is there from the very beginning, pure and self-

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[3] PBD, pp.16-17.

perfected and does not have to be constructed. It exists in every being, and cannot be destroyed, though the experience of it is lost when a being enters into dualism. It is then temporarily obscured by the interaction of the negative mental states of the passions of attachment and aversion that arise from the root ignorance of dualistic vision. But the Base should not be objectified as a self-existent thing, it is a state, or condition of being.[4]

These statements point out the role played by the defilements of attraction, aversion, ignorance, etc. in obscuring the Base. The question remains, however, that as the Base is beyond all defilement how can it be the basis upon which defilement is established.

The PBD does not, in fact, hold the Base to be the basis of defilement. The PBD teaches that there are three bases of defilement: 1) Reality (chos-nyid), 2) The mind (sems), and 3) The body (lus). The first of these refers in particular to the objective sphere,[5] the second to awareness (rig-pa), and the third to the five lights.[6]

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4 Namkhai Norbu, The Crystal and the Way of Light, (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.57.

5 PBD, p.43.

6 The five lights are azure, red, white, green, and yellow.

The PBD explains the suitability of these three bases for being bases of delusion in these words:

> Reality is fit to be the basis for delusion (_'khrul-gzhi_) of the objective sphere, for without awareness it appears as a material thing. Awareness is fit to be the basis for delusion of the mind, for mere awareness has partiality. The five lights are fit to be the basis for delusion of the body, for they have the partiality of color and shape.[7]

The way that these bases for delusion are developed into delusion itself is explained as follows:

> 1) At first reality is empty, without awareness. In the middle wisdom arises in aspects. At the end grasping, conceptualization, and tendencies swell forth. These appear as if they were essenceless. This is taught as the basis for delusion of the object.
>
> 2) At first awareness flickers (_'gyus_) without hindrance. In the middle grasping

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Their relationship to the body and to the five wisdoms is discussed in this thesis on p.121.

[7] PBD, p.44.

towards the luminescence is born. At the end the mentation of the mind (sems-kyi-yid) flickers. From this mental conceptions (sems-rtog) arise in plurality. This teaches the basis for delusion of the mind.

3) At first awareness arises from space (klong). In the middle reality arises in space. At the end the material psycho-physical constituents (skandhas) of form appear because of the tendencies towards this [reality]. This teaches the basis for delusion of the body.[8]

All three of these analyses are expressions of how a living being departs from the sphere of pure being through the ignorance of dualistic conceptions. This delusion may take as its object reality, the mind, or the body, and as such these are the bases of ignorance. From this basic ignorance all conditioned existence, including our temporal world and the sentient beings that live in it, are formed.

The process by which the world is formed or created is also discussed in the PBD. The passage in question describes how reality is at first pure but then becomes obscured due to objectification, conceptualization and grasping. The passage reads as follows:

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[8] PBD, pp.43-44.

I, [rDo-rje 'Chang], will explain the cause [of delusion] and the condition of the cause [of delusion]. The cause is unhindered awareness. The condition is empty reality (chos-nyid-stong-pa). Awareness, the characteristic of the Dharmakāya, is emptiness inseparable from awareness, unobstructed profound knowledge. The azure, white, red, yellow, and green hold individual characteristics. Pure reality, which abides in its own cause, is seen like a mirror. The five arisings of wisdom (ye-shes-'byung-lnga)[9] arise like a rainbow in the sky.

In the next moment the aspects of the imagination (dmigs--pa) appear as an object. Conceptualization comes forth by grasping to the condition [of empty reality]. . . .

At this moment the five natural lights cannot be clear due to the discursive conceptualizations of subject and object.

The four continents, Mt. Meru, and the small islands appear, like chunks of ice on a lake or chunks of scum on yogurt, by [means of] tendencies towards the five images

9 The five wisdoms are discussed in this thesis on p.112ff.

> (gzugs-brnyan). The egg of the world,[10] fruit trees, medicinal [herbs], flowers and forests are born in the potency of these [land masses]. They are born from moisture and warmth. In this way the vessel of the world [enters] a different aeon after the intermediate aeon. [The world] is born from moisture and heat which are not grasped by knowledge.
>
> The egg of the world, which has the identity of the five elements (of earth, water, fire, wind, and space) is impure. The sons of men and friends of men are born from this.
>
> That which has the identity of both attachment and aversion is the support of the body.[11]

The PBD also discusses the way sentient beings come forth in the world:

> Just as wind flickers through the empty sky, the great wind of the mind (yid) courses everywhere. By the engagement of the eyes the egg of the world is perceived. By the

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10 For a description of the egg of the world see Namkhai Norbu, The Crystal and the Way of Light, op. cit., p.60.

11 PBD, pp.48-49.

engagement of the mind the egg of the world is well and beautifully understood. By the engagement of the face the mind of attachment (chags-sems) is born toward this. Awareness dwells in conjunction with the mind.

Sentient beings ripen at the root to both male and female. From the four [types of] births,[12] this is the egg born.

In the Base the five psycho-physical constituents[13] are established in the five great elements. The aspect of the five [elements] which come from the support [or Base] is complete, so the psycho-physical constituents, the sense bases, and the elements[14] are established. They are known as the sons of men and friends of men.

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[12] The four types of birth are: 1) Egg-born, such as birds; 2) Womb-born, such as humans; 3) Adventitiously-born, such as insects (which are believed to arise from the dust); and 4) Miraculously-born, such as incarnate Buddhas who appear directly in the world without any normal "birth."

[13] The five psycho-physical constituents are: 1) Form (rūpa), 2) Feelings (vedanā), 3) Perceptions (saṃjñā), 4) Impulses (saṃskāra), and 5) Consciousness (vijñāna). See Th. Stcherbatsky, The Central Conception of Buddhism, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp.6-7.

[14] The sense bases (āyatana) are the cognitive faculties and their objects. The elements (dhātus) are the six sense faculties, the six objects of these faculties, and the six consciousnesses. See Stcherbatsky, ibid, p.6-10.

> Then there comes forth birth from a womb.
>
> The untormented gradually becomes the world. Defilements are coarse, and results are bad. At last [they] touch the abode of Avici [hell].[15]

These passages show that from the point of view of the PBD both the material world and the beings that inhabit it come into existence with the arising of the defilements of attachment and aversion which have ignorance at their root. Thus both the experiencers and objects of experience that constitute inauthentic being are the results of a basic delusion whose basic nature is the dichotomizing of reality into subject and object and the generation of attachment and aversion towards this bifurcated reality.

The PBD does not leave off its analysis of delusion with these passages, but also presents a deeper analysis of delusion itself. In this analysis the PBD discriminates two sorts of delusion: 1) Co-emergent ignorance (lhan-cig-skyes-pa'i-ma-rig-pa)[16], and 2) The ignorance of false

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15 PBD, p.50. The Avici hell is the lowest of the eighteen hells of Buddhist cosmology. See Sgam-po-pa, op. cit., p.59.

16 Sahaja-avidya. This translation following Herbert Guenther, who says with regard to co-emergent wisdom (the opposite of our term): "The literal translation of the Tibetan term lhan-cig-skyes-pa (Sanskrit sahaja) would be 'coemergence', and as such it is explained by Padma dkar-po, Phyag-chen gan-mdzod..., fols. 29a ff. Essentially it refers to the spontaneity and totality of the experience in which the opposites such as transcendence and imminence,

imagination (kun-brtags-kyi-ma-rig-pa).[17]

With regard to the first of these, the co-emergent ignorance, the PBD states: "The co-emergent ignorance is born together with that which it comes from."[18] The text then goes on to give a clearer explanation of the term:

> If you ask from what [it comes], it is from the Base Grasping Awareness. If you ask what and what [arise together], it is the co-emergent wisdom[19] and ignorance. If you ask what [it is], it is that by contrivance there is ignorance toward the space of uncontrived reality.[20]

This is to say that at a single moment of cognition there is both wisdom and ignorance, which arise together, and that this moment of cognition represents a contrived or

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subject and object, the noumenal and the phenomenal indivisibly blend. The translation of this term by 'l'Inne' (M. Shahidullah) and 'the innate' (D.L. Snellgrove) is wrong." See The Royal Song of Saraha, op. cit., p.9n.

17 This translation following Nagao Gadjin who translates the term parikalpita (Tib. kun-brtags) as "imagination," but specifies that this imagination is always false. See Nagao Gadjin, "The Buddhist World View as Elucidated in the Three-Nature Theory and Its Similes," The Eastern Buddhist, New Series. Vol. XVI, No. 1. Spring 1983. pp.1-18. See especially p.2.

18 PBD, p.45.

19 See above p.82. fn.16.

20 PBD, pp.45-46.

false intuition of the reality in question. This cognition comes from a grasping, or attachment to, the Base. The PBD offers the simile of an image appearing in a mirror, where the moment the object is placed in front of the mirror the reflection also arises.[21]

With regard to the second form of ignorance the PBD states:

> The ignorance of false imagination is born in subtle and coarse conceptualizations toward an object. It is in the manner of previous and later moments.[22]

This is to say that with this ignorance there may be an awareness of an object which is then grasped upon to be some particular thing by the imagination, which has no grasp on the true reality of that thing.

The term parikalpita (false imagination) is employed by the Yogacara school of Buddhism, where it is one of the "three natures" (trisvabhāva). The PBD does not use the other two terms of the three nature theory at any point. An understanding of this term in its traditional Buddhist usage will nonetheless be helpful in gaining insight into this term. Nagao Gadjin presents an excellent discussion of this term in his article "The Buddhist World-View as Elucidated

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21 PBD, p.45.

22 PBD, p. 45.

in the Three-Nature Theory and Its Similes:"

> This one unchanging world is originally neither contaminated nor purified, but rather neutral, just like the world which a scientist deals with as the object of his research. However, insofar as our interaction with this world occurs directly or instinctively, like an animal, without reflection or self-consciousness -- that is, insofar as we are not yet enlightened to its reality but remain in a deluded state -- we speak of this world as a world of the imagined nature; it is an imagined world. Through our cognitions, or discriminations, or intellect, we are always projecting some kind of imagination (which is always false imagination from the Buddhist point of view) onto the world that is originally neutral. This projection of false imagination changes or "contaminates" the world, thinking that it is the real world. This attachment gives rise to all forms of human suffering, discontent, conflict, defilement, and so on. In short, this contaminated world to which people become attached is the world of <u>saṃsāra</u> which the Buddha declared to be full

> of suffering. The imagined world, then, appears upon the change, conversion, or turnabout of the world from a neutral, pure, uncontaminated state to an impure, imagined, contaminated state.[23]

These two sorts of delusion are held by the PBD to be the cause of all conditioned existence, and in particular the failure to intuit the Base in its true being. From these forms of ignorance all the defilements come forth, the material world and the beings within it arise, and suffering ensues. Nonetheless, "Ignorance is not real, but is experientially existent."[24]

The act of going beyond this ignorance, of intuiting reality in its primordial purity, is termed by the PBD "recognition" (ngo-sprod). Before entering a discussion of recognition in the PBD, however, it will be helpful to elucidate the PBD's views on the nature of the Buddha, of wisdom, and of the path. This discussion will lay a framework from which the PBD's statements on recognition will be more fully understood.

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23 Nagao Gadjin, op. cit., p.3.

24 PBD, p.46.

CHAPTER 5

The Buddha-kāya

The PBD is a Buddhist text, yet up to the present there has been almost no mention of the Buddha in this thesis. The word kāya has, however, occurred in various quotations I have made from the PBD. This section of the thesis will be devoted to an explanation of the PBD's understanding of the Buddha and will also clarify the word kāya.

There is a close interrelationship between the PBD's understanding of Buddha and of kāya. Before this connection is discussed, however, it will be useful to discuss the term kāya so that it may be properly understood.

Kāya is a Sanskrit word, and is translated into the Tibetan as sku.[1] In his Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary Franklin Edgerton defines kāya as "body," and provides understandings of the term that designate it as both the

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[1] Lokesh Chandra, p.129.

body of a person and the body of a group of persons or things, in which case he recommends the terms "mass," "bundle," or "group."[2] He also points out that this term is used in the Buddhist technical terms Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya.[3]

Nagao Gadjin in his excellent study on the history and meaning of the term kāya, "On the Theory of the Buddha-Body (Buddha-kāya),"[4] translates kāya as "body." Many other authors and translators follow this translation as well. In the translation of Tibetan texts the word "body" is often used as a translation for the word sku. This term sku is in Tibetan the honorific term for the word lus, which does in fact mean "body."[5] The word "body" is not, however, and adequate translation of either the Tibetan sku or the Sanskrit kāya. Herbert Guenther comments that "the Tibetan term sku always implies the dynamic character of being and existing; the static aspect of 'body' is termed lus."[6] This statement strikes right at the heart of the difficulty of adequately translating sku. The problem becomes compounded

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2 Franklin Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), p.177.

3 Ibid.

4 Nagao Gadjin, "The Buddha-body," op. cit.

5 H.A. Jaschke, A Tibetan-English Dictionary, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1881), p.21.

6 Herbert Guenther, The Royal Song of Saraha, (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1973), p.5 note 4.

when *sku* is combined with other technical terms to form the words *chos-sku* (*Dharmakāya*), *longs-sku* (*Sambhogakāya*), and *sprul-sku* (*Nirmāṇakāya*). Nagao Gadjin translates these terms "Dharma-body," "Enjoyment-body," and "Transformation-body" respectively.[7] Tulku Thondup Rinpoche translates these terms "Ultimate body," "Enjoyment body," and "Manifesting body."[8] Herbert Guenther, on the other hand, uses the terms "noetic being," "communicative being," and "authentic being."[9]

Each of these translations of *sku* or *kāya* has advantages and disadvantages. The striking point to be noted here is that there is no consensus as to how the terms should be translated. This is in part due to the lack of terms in English that easily lend themselves to encompassing the meanings of the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms. Herbert Guenther, in *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, has opted to translate the Tibetan term *sku* as "kāya."[10] He also translates the connected technical terms mentioned above into their Sanskrit equivalents. He does not italicize these Sanskrit words, for they are used as the working

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7 Nagao Gadjin, *op. cit.*

8 Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, *op. cit.*, P.273-279.

9 H. Guenther, *Saraha*, p.5 note 4.

10 Herbert Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

vocabulary of his study. For my presentation of the PBD I have determined that this is the best course to take, for it avoids the difficulties inherent in each of the possible English translations and allows the reader to develop his or her own comprehension of the true meanings of these terms.

The PBD speaks of the Buddha as being or having "two kāyas" (sku-gnyis) or "three kāyas" (sku-gsum). The two kāyas referred to are the Dharmakāya (chos-sku) and the Rūpakāya (gzugs-sku). The three kāyas mentioned are the Dharmakāya, the Sambhogakāya, and the Nirmāṇakāya. These are not actually separate groupings in the PBD, for the Rūpakāya of the two kāya system is actually the Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya of the three kāya system. This can be understood in that the Dharmakāya is the pure, noetic, and unmanifest aspect of Buddhahood while the two Rūpakāyas are manifest aspects of Buddhahood. The difference between the two Rūpakāyas is that the Sambhogakāya manifests only to accomplished spiritual beings or Bodhisattvas (Beings of Enlightened Mind) while the Nirmāṇakāya manifests in the material world to normal living beings.

The PBD's discussion of the Buddha is therefore found in its enumeration and clarification of the three kāyas. In my analysis of this discussion I will first present the PBD's definitions of the three kāyas, then I will discuss some of the terminology the PBD uses in relation to the three kāyas, and finally I will present a detailed account

of each of the kāyas according to the PBD's statements on these points.

In chapter thirty-four of the PBD the Lord of Secrets requests an explanation of the three kāyas from rDo-rje 'Chang. rDo-rje 'Chang's answer begins as follows:

> The essence of the Dharmakāya is profound knowledge which does not fall into partiality and is non-dual.
>
> The essence of the Sambhogakāya is Characteristic Grasping Wisdom, clear and non-conceptual.
>
> The essence of the Nirmāṇakāya is unhindered compassion.
>
> The definition of the Dharmakāya is pervasiveness and non-support (ma-rten-pa).
>
> The definition of the Sambhogakāya is the enjoyment (sambhoga) of the pure realm and the ripening of the retinue.
>
> The definition of the Nirmāṇakāya is that unhindered compassion manifests (nirmāṇa) as many things. . . . It is the Nirmāṇakāya because it abides for a short while. It is the Nirmāṇakāya because it appears in accordance [with the world]. It is also the Nirmāṇakāya because it appears in undefined

[forms].[11]

The Buddha is often referred to as the Blessed One (Bhagavan), both in the PBD and in the Buddhist tradition in general. The Sanskrit word Bhagavan is translated into Tibetan as bcom-ldan-'das.[12] This Tibetan word has three syllables, which mean literally "defeat" (bcom), "possession" (ldan), and "transcendence" ('das). Chapter thirty-seven of the PBD is devoted to an explanation of the Buddha's three kāyas based on the three-fold division of the word bcom-ldan-'das. This explanation supplements the definitions of the kāyas just mentioned.

> The Dharmakāya is unhindered and thus destroys (bcom) the Māra[13] of the Lord of Death. It has no marks and thus destroys the Māra of the psycho-physical constituents. It is non-dual and thus destroys the Māra of the passions. It destroys them by its very nature.
>
> The lifeless (srog-med) five

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[11] PBD, pp.70-71.

[12] Lokesh Chandra, Dictionary, p.679.

[13] Māra (bdud) is the force of negativity that attempts to prevent spiritual progress and enlightenment. There are traditionally four Māras. These are: 1) The Mara of the defilements (kleśa-māra), 2) The Mara of the psycho-physical constituents (skandha-māra), 3) The Mara of the Lord of Death (mṛtyu-māra), and 4) The Devaputra Māra, or anthropomorphicized "Evil One." See F. Edgerton, Dictionary, p.430.

[Sambhoga]kāyas destroy the Māra of the Lord of Death. Wisdom is an illusion, and thus destroys the Māra of the psycho-physical constituents. The mind (sems) without conceptualization destroys the Māra of passions and the Devaputra Māra.

The intuition of the Nirmāṇakāya of adamantine being's purposefulness destroys the Māra of the defilements and likewise the Devaputra Māra. . . .

The Dharmakāya is the Wide Door of Quality and thus possesses (ldan) the five wisdoms[14] and two [Rūpa]kāyas. The Sambhogakāya possesses the marks and secondary marks. It possesses the inspiration of the five wisdoms. It possesses the six dharmas of supernatural perception. The Nirmāṇakāya possesses miracles and magic. . . .

The Dharmakāya transcends ('das) all the extremes. The Sambhogakāya transcends subject and object, the dharmas of samsara. The Nirmāṇakāya possesses great profound knowledge and compassionate means, and thus does not abide in and transcends the extremes

[14] The five wisdoms are discussed in this thesis on p.112ff.

of both samsara and nirvana.[15]

The word "Buddha" is rendered sangs-rgyas in Tibetan. The syllable sangs means to remove or clear away. The syllable rgyas means to expand or open up.[16] The PBD presents the three kāyas in relation to these two terms that make up "Buddha":

> The Dharmakāya removes (sangs) all the dharmas of marks which appear dualistically. It expands (rgyas) the self-clear non-dual wisdom. The Sambhogakāya removes the dharmas of samsara. It expands omniscience and the greater good quality of the Dharmakāya. The Nirmāṇakāya removes all ignorance and perverse views. It removes samsara and deluded appearance. It expands profound knowledge, skillful means, and compassion.[17]

Another analysis of the three kāyas is with reference to their purity.

> The Dharmakāya in its essentiality is non-defiled. The Sambhogakāya is pure of the defilements of what can be known (shes-bya). The Nirmāṇakāya is pure of the defilements of

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[15] PBD, pp.76-78.

[16] Jaschke, Dictionary, p.571 & p.109.

[17] PBD, p.77.

> the obscurations [of attachment, aversion, ignorance, etc.].[18]

These are the definitions of the three kāyas found in the PBD. The PBD's usage of these terms will now be elucidated so that the kāyas may be better understood.

The first definition of the Dharmakāya presented above was that it is "profound knowledge that does not fall into partiality and is non-dual." In the discussion of the Base, under the divisions of the existential mode of the Base and the Great Appearance of the Base, the Kāya of Essentiality (ngo-bo-nyid-kyi-sku, Skt. svabhāvika-kāya) -- which is the existential mode of the Base -- was defined as "profound knowledge that does not fall into partiality."[19] That the terms Dharmakāya and Svabhāvikakāya are defined identically might lead us to believe them identical. Indeed, Nagao Gadjin in his study of the Buddha-kāya says that these two terms refer to the same thing.[20] However, the PBD at one point defines the Dharmakāya as the Great Appearance of the Base.[21] This would indicate that while the Svabhāvikakāya is the existential mode of the Base the Dharmakāya is the Appearance of the Base. The PBD is not consistent on this

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18 PBD, p.78.

19 See this thesis, p.67.

20 Nagao Gadjin, Buddha-kaya, p.31.

21 PBD, p.56.

point, however, for Dharmakāya is given as a synonym for the Base in its non-dual aspect as well.[22] The PBD clarifies the issue to some degree in stating that "at the time [the Dharmakāya] is not intuited it is the Kāya of Essentiality. At the time of intuition it is exactly the Dharmakāya."[23] This statement is helpful, but also obfuscates the issue further, for the Kāya of Essentiality as the existential mode of the Base is not subject to delusion. The PBD is therefore not consistent or clear regarding the relationship of the Svabhāvikakāya and the Dharmakāya.

On many occasions throughout the text the PBD speaks of "The Dharmakāya of self-awareness" (rang-rig-chos-sku). On one occasion self-awareness (rang-rig) and the Dharmakāya are said to be identical.[24] "Self-awareness" is a very literal translation for the Tibetan word rang-rig. This translation presents the risk that the word may be understood as "awareness of the self," which would not be correct. "Self-awareness" refers to self-referential awareness, awareness which is not directed toward an object but rather is aware of its own being aware. This is not the same as introspective awareness in that introspective awareness objectifies the inner workings of the mind and

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22 This thesis, p.60.

23 PBD, p.99.

24 PBD, p.157.

makes them its object. The term "self-referential awareness" might be used to translate rang-rig, yet I have preferred to stick as close to the Tibetan term as possible despite the risk entailed. It is hoped that false understandings of the term may be prevented by the present explanation.

With regard to the relationship between the three kāyas, the PBD holds that they are neither identical nor different.[25] Nonetheless there is a certain relationship between the three kāyas which the PBD describes as follows:

> The Sambhogakāya is multiplied through the Dharmakāya, and this is taught to be the Nirmāṇakāya. The Nirmāṇakāya teaches living beings, and therefore is the Teacher (ston-pa).[26]

This statement is clarified at another point:

> The forty-two Sambhogakāyas are transformations of the light ('od-'gyur) of the Dharmakāya. From their speech the playful Nirmāṇakāyas explain the characteristics [of reality] individually to the six disciples.[27]

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[25] PBD, p.102.

[26] PBD, p.75.

[27] PBD, p.69. The forty-two Sambhogakayas are discussed in this thesis on p. . The six disciples are the disciples of the six classes of temporal existence: The gods, asuras,

The PBD presents a division of the three kayas that will be helpful in understanding the relationships between them as well as to clarify the PBD's own view of the three kāyas.[28] This division divides each of the three kāyas in turn into three more kāyas. Thus for the Dharmakāya there are the Dharmakāya-Dharmakāya, the Dharmakāya-Sambhogakāya, and the Dharmakāya-Nirmāṇakāya. For the Sambhogakāya there are the Sambhogakāya-Dharmakāya, the Sambhogakāya-Sambhogakāya, and the Sambhogakāya-Nirmāṇakāya. For the Nirmāṇakāya there are the Nirmāṇakāya-Dharmakāya, the Nirmāṇakāya-Sambhogakāya, and the Nirmāṇakāya-Nirmāṇakāya. The PBD does not provide elucidation of all nine of these kayas, but describes most of them. The description is as follows:

> The Dharmakāya-Dharmakāya is awareness free from all identification. The Dharmakāya-Sambhogakāya is awareness with unhindered knowledge (mkhyen-pa) of the kāya of profound knowledge. The Dharmakāya-Nirmāṇakāya is the five kāyas which appear to disciples. . . . These are called the essence, true nature, and compassion. They

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humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. See Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, pp.55-74.

[28] PBD, p.70.

are also called the three kāyas which abide in the Base.

The Sambhogakāya-Sambhogakāya is the four [Buddha] families. The Sambhogakāya-Nirmāṇakāya is the male and female Bodhisattvas. . . . These are called the three kāyas set out in aspects.

The Nirmāṇakāya-Dharmakāya is the four [Buddha] families. The Nirmāṇakāya-Sambhogakāya is the male and female Bodhisattvas. The Nirmāṇakāya-Nirmāṇakāya is the light rays of compassion. . . . These are called the three kāyas which bring forth compassion. . . . They are also called the three kāyas which subdue living beings.[29]

This description defines all nine kāyas except the Sambhogakāya-Dharmakāya. The four Buddha families will be discussed shortly. For the present it should be noted that the four Buddha families (rigs-bzhi) are an abbreviation of the five Buddha families (rigs-lnga), the difference being that in the four family system the central figure of Vairocana and his family are disregarded. The Buddhas which are the lords of these five Buddha families are the five kayas which appear to disciples. This allows presentation

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29 PBD, pp.70-71.

of a diagram showing the relationships between these nine kāyas. For the sake of space Dharmakāya is shown as "D," Sambhogakāya is shown as "S," and Nirmāṇakāya is shown as "N":

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D-D. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
D-S. . . . . . [S-D]. . . . . . . .
D-N. . . . . . S-S. . . . . .N-D. .
. . . . . . . .S-N. . . . . . N-S. .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . S-S. .
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This table shows that there is an overlap between the three kāyas as they are subdivided into their nine levels. The position of the Sambhogakāya-Dharmakāya has been determined by postulating its place in reference to the definitions provided for the other eight kayas. This presentation of the three kāyas as nine kāyas is helpful for seeing the interconnectedness of the three kāyas, yet it is only in this nine-kāya presentation that the differentiation is used in the PBD. In the general body of the text the three kāyas are not presented in this way. This introduces the difficulty that a reference to the Sambhogakāya, for example, may refer to the Dharmakāya-Sambhogakāya, the Sambhogakāya-Dharmakāya, the Sambhogakāya-Sambhogakāya, the Sambhogakāya-Nirmāṇakāya, or the Nirmāṇakāya-Sambhogakāya. The element of confusion this creates is not resolved in the PBD. The reader must simply do his or her best to understand the three kāyas on whatever level the PBD

presents them at any particular point.

There is one paragraph in the PBD where rDo-rje 'Chang gives three concrete examples of how the Buddhas fit into this nine kāya system. It reads as follows:

> I, the adamantine being, am the Dharmakāya-Nirmāṇakāya. . . . The kāyas such as Mañjuśri-amala-garbha are Sambhogakāya-Nirmāṇakāyas. The six sages (thub-pa) such as dGa'-rab rDo-rje are Nirmāṇakāya-Nirmāṇakāyas.[30]

This statement informs us that rDo-rJe 'Chang is manifesting on the level of the five Buddha families, which will be discussed shortly. Mañjuśri is known as the Bodhisattva of Wisdom and as such is presented on the level of the Sambhogakāya-Nirmāṇakāya, the level of Bodhisattvas. dGa'-rab rDo-rje is the compiler of the PBD and is also held to be the sage for the class of human beings at the level of the Nirmāṇakāya-Nirmāṇakāya. The six sages are the manifestations of Buddhahood that appear in the six locales of samsaric existence. The six sages, according to the traditional rNying-ma presentation, are: 1) Indra for the gods, 2) Thags-bzang-ris for the asuras, 3) Śakyamuni for the humans, 4) Seng-ge Rab-brtan for the animals, 5) sGrom-bu Kha-'bar for the hungry ghosts, and 6) the Dharma-king Yama for

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30 PBD, p.71.

the hells.[31] The PBD replaces the Buddha Śakyamuni with dGa'-rab rDo-rje as the sage for the humans. This indicates the primacy the PBD places on the first human expounder of the Great Perfection tradition over the historical founder of the Buddhist religion.

In the definition of the three kāyas of the Dharmakāya just mentioned they were described as the "essence, true nature, and compassion." The PBD elucidates this point by noting that "the essence (ngo-bo) is the Dharmakāya. The true-nature (rang-bzhin) is the Sambhogakāya. Compassion (thugs-rje) is the Nirmāṇakāya."[32] These terms are in turn elucidated as follows:

> The essence is uncreated, uncontrived, unadulterated, unchanging, and naturally pure. It is the great uncompounded wisdom, the sky-like reality, the empty adamantine subject (stong-pa-rdo-rje-chos-can), the great insubstantial primordially pure penetrating awareness.
>
> The true nature is the great wisdom which abides in the Base and is the five wisdoms which grasp characteristics. It is

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[31] This information kindly provided by my Tibetan informant Khenpo Palden Sherab, who is one of the most deeply learned native scholars of the rNying-ma tradition living.

[32] PBD, p.72.

unhindered, just as light is clear in the [above mentioned] essence.

Compassion is in its vital essentiality the five kāyas.[33]

This quotation provides an insight into the Dharmakāya on its three levels. The five wisdoms will be discussed in the following chapter of this thesis. The five kāyas and the five Buddha families of which they are the lords will now be investigated.

The Buddhas of the five families are presented in the PBD as Sambhogakāya Buddhas.[34] It has already been shown, however, that the level on which the Buddha families manifest may be either the Dharmakāya-Nirmāṇakāya, the Sambhogakāya-Sambhogakāya, or the Nirmāṇakāya-Dharmakāya. The PBD describes the Sambhogakāya as the "king of kāyas,"[35] for it is the Sambhogakāya that actually initiates the dissemination of the teaching on the highest possible level. The Dharmakāya is unmanifest and beyond interactive processes. The Nirmāṇakāya manifests in the world, and as such conforms with the limitations inherent in worldly existence, though it is capable of miraculous activity. It is the Sambhogakāya that is both manifest and completely

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33 PBD, p.72.

34 PBD, p.64.

35 PBD, p.65.

beyond limitations.

The PBD describes the origin of the Sambhogakāya as follows:

> The space (klong) of the indivisible reality and Dharmakāya is [known as] The Dense Array of Purity.[36] The five vessels (bum-pa) of self-luminescent wisdom appear as unhindered sprouts (myu-gu). The five appearances of pure reality, the azure, white, yellow, red, and green complete the unmixed clear wisdom (ma-'dres-gsal-ba'i-ye-shes). The five kāyas are realized from amongst these five. They abide in the five [places], the four directions and the center.[37]

This passage informs us that from the Dharmakāya in its indivisible connection with reality the five self-luminescent wisdoms come forth. These five wisdoms manifest as light of the five colors. The five Sambhogakāyas come forth as manifestations of this luminosity. This passage makes apparent the importance of the five wisdoms in understanding the lords of the five Buddha families. A full

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[36] The Dense Array of Purity is the name of a Buddha-field where the Sambhogakaya becomes apparent. See Bod-rgya Tshig-mdzod Chen-po, Vol.2, p.1103.

[37] PBD, p.59.

discussion of the nature of the five wisdoms and their relationships to the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas follows in the next chapter. At this point I want to draw attention to the final statement in the above quotation, that the five Buddhas abide in the four directions and the center.

"The four directions and the center" is a reference to the positions in the maṇḍala or interactive matrix. Each of the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas abides in one position of this maṇḍala.[38] The PBD devotes five chapters to a description of this maṇḍala in all its aspects.[39] The maṇḍala in its entirety contains forty-two figures, which are referred to as the forty-two Sambhogakāyas.[40] The space available does

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[38] The five tathāgatas, the lords of the five Buddha families, are not a creation of the Tibetans, but are found in the earliest Sanskrit Tantric literature. They are mentioned in the Sādhanamāla (Baroda: Gaekwad Oriental Series, 1968) in the Kurukulla-sādhana by Indrabhuti which lists the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas just as does the PBD; The Arapachana-sādhana in the Sādhanamāla also speaks of the five tathāgatas, but considers them eminations of Mañjuśri. The Guhyasiddhi by Padmavajra mentions the five Buddhas, but with different names. They are there listed as: 1) Sasvata (Vairocana), 2) Akśobhya, 3) Ratna (Ratnasambhava), 4) Ayus (Amitābha), and 5 Kuladya (Amoghasiddhi). The Jñānasiddhi by Indrabhuti (found in Two Vajrayana Works, Baroda: Gaekwad Oriental Series, 1922) Ed. by Benoytosh Bhattacharya, lists the five tathāgatas as in the PBD. The Sahajasiddhi by Ḍombīheruka (Baroda: Gaekwad Oriental Series, unpublished manuscript) lists these same five tathāgatas under the name of kuleśas (Lords of the Families). The Advayasiddhi of Lakṣmīmkāra (Baroda: Unpublished manuscript) Ed. by Malati Shendge, presents the same list of tathāgatas.

[39] PBD, chapters 26-31.

[40] See this thesis, p.97.

not allow a full description of this maṇḍala with reference to the individual significance of each member. I shall therefore present the five Buddhas who are the principal figures of the maṇḍala and the lords of the five Buddha families along with the names and locations of the other members of the maṇḍala.

The PBD presents the five main figures of the maṇḍala as follows:

> At the center Vairocana faces all [the other] four in the wisdom of all appearance (kun-snang-ye-shes). He appears as Akśobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and the great Amoghasiddhi. His mudra is held at his own heart. He holds the identity of the five colors.[41]

Further in the text the names of these Buddhas are given with short glosses:

> The one kaya which exists in luminosity as the five kayas is Vairocana. He is unchanging Akśobhya. He brings forth good qualities without partiality, so he is Ratnasambhava. He is the appearance of the force of compassion unstained by faults: Amitābha is the kaya without limit. He

41 PBD, p.59.

> accomplishes the purpose of self and others without obstruction, so the kāya of Amoghasiddhi reaches the limit of spiritual action.[42]

These passages make it clear that Vairocana encompasses all the Buddhas while the different aspects of his being are manifested as the other four Buddhas. It is for this reason that the PBD alternately speaks of the four Buddha families and the five Buddha families. The five Buddha families are the families of Vairocana, Akśobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi. The four Buddha families are the secondary manifestations of Vairocana as the central figure and are thus Akśobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi.

The PBD refers to the Buddha families by the names of the Buddhas that lead them. The Vajrayāna tradition, however, has separate names for these Buddha families which differ from the names of the Buddhas themselves. The family of Vairocana is referred to as the Buddha family. Akśobhya's is the Vajra family. Ratnasambhava's is the Ratna family. Amitābha's is the Padma family. Amoghasiddhi's is the Karma family.[43]

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[42] PBD, p.65.

[43] See Keith Dowman, Sky Dancer, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.193. Also see Mkhas Grub Rje, Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, trans. F.D. Lessing and A.

Each of these five Sambhogakāya Buddhas sits in union with his consort (yum). The male principle of the Buddha himself is referred to as a manifestation of method or skillful means (thabs) while the consort is a manifestation of profound knowledge (shes-rab). Their being joined in sexual union is an indication of the inseparability of means and profound knowledge.[44] The PBD states this clearly:

> The five female consorts [are joined to the Buddhas] like a body (lus) and its shadow. Thus the non-dual means and profound knowledge abide with faces joined.[45]

The PBD does not give a name for Vairocana's consort, nor does it describe any Bodhisattvas in his retinue. Each of the other four Buddhas, however, not only has a consort but has a Bodhisattva on his left and right. Each of these Bodhisattvas in turn has a consort. The PBD speaks of each Buddha with his consort and retinue as a heaped maṇḍala (thsom-bu-dkyil-'khor). Thus the one maṇḍala of the five Buddhas becomes five maṇḍalas.

The PBD does not state any particular direction of the maṇḍala in which any particular Buddha abides. This information cannot safely be derived from outside sources,

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Wayman (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968), pp.119, 147, 149.

44 PBD, p.60.

45 PBD, p.60.

for the locations of the five Buddhas vary in the different Tantric systems.

The consort of Akśobhya is Buddhalocanā. On his right sits Kśitigarbha with his consort Lāsya. On his left sits Maitreya with his consort Dhupe. The consort of Ratnasambhava is Māmaki. On his right sits Samantabhadra with his consort Māla. On his left sits Ākāśagarbha with Dhūpe. The consort of Amitābha is Pāṇḍaravāsinī. On his right sits Avalokiteśvara with Girtima. On his left sits Mañjuśri with Aloke. The consort of Amoghasiddhi is Samayatārā. On his right sits Vajrapāṇi with Ghirti. On his left sits Sarvanivaraṇaviskambhin with Gante.

Each Buddha and Bodhisattva is also Samantabhadra.[46] The Buddhas are thus identified with the primordial Buddha (adibuddha). This Samantabhadra should not be confused with the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra who sits at Ratnasambhava's right. Vairocana, the central Buddha, is not only identified with Samantabhadra, he is none other than the teacher of the PBD, rDo-rje 'Chang.[47] The above quoted passages indicates that the four Buddhas are emanations of Vairocana, yet in another passage it states that:

> Vairocana sees their faces and knows their inspiration. Vairocana is self-apparent and

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46 PBD, p.74.

47 PBD, p.69.

> has no appearance as another. He is self-arising, self-apparent, self-rising, and is known by himself. His own force is not created at any one point.[48]

The maṇḍala is protected in each of the four quarters by a gate-keeper (sgo-srung).[49] Each gate-keeper also has a consort. These figures are not named in the PBD.

The total number of figures in the maṇḍala is said to be forty-two, yet it is difficult to add up the characters mentioned to that number. The five Buddhas with their consorts make ten. The eight Bodhisattvas with their consorts make sixteen. The four door-keepers with their consorts make eight. This adds up to a total of thirty-four figures. If, however, the four Buddhas that surround Vairocana and their consorts are counted twice: once in their identities as Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava. Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi, etc.; and once in their identities as Samantabhadra and Samantabhadrī, the total number does become forty-two. The PBD is not clear on this point.

Nowhere in the PBD does it recommend that this maṇḍala of Sambhogakāya Buddhas be used as an object of meditation or spiritual practice. The purpose for this exposition appears to be simply to show the way the Sambhogakāya

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48 PBD, p.59.

49 PBD, p.62.

maṇḍala is layed out. The importance of the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas in the PBD is most strongly felt in the presentation of their relationships to the five wisdoms. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

It remains to present the PBD's account of the Nirmāṇakāya. The PBD is very quiet on this point, however. The six sages mentioned above are described as Nirmāṇakāya Buddhas. Beyond this the PBD has almost nothing to say about the Nirmāṇakāyas, except that they are manifestations of compassion and that they have the ability to perform miracles. The lack of lengthy discussion of the Nirmāṇakāyas in the PBD can be attributed to the importance placed on the Sambhogakāya as both the origin of the teaching and the pure manifestation of wisdom.

This completes my discussion of the Buddha and his three kāyas. The three kāyas will be mentioned again in the discussion of recognition, where the recognition of the three kāyas is presented as a fundamental insight into the definitive meaning of the Buddha's teaching and necessary for the elimination of delusion. The nature of wisdom and the path must be discussed first, however, for the PBD's statements on these subjects will serve as a groundwork from which recognition will be better understood.

CHAPTER 6

Wisdom

Wisdom (ye-shes) has been mentioned many times in the preceding portions of this thesis. It is a fundamental aspect of the PBD's presentation. This chapter is devoted to an inquiry into the PBD's treatment of this subject.

The PBD sometimes speaks of wisdom as a single concept, but most often wisdom is presented in a particular aspect or enumeration. The five wisdoms, in particular, are mentioned throughout the text. In the preceding chapter on the Buddha-kaya it was shown that these five wisdoms are the ground from which the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas arise. In the discussion of the Base it was shown that wisdom is a synonym for the Base. These statements will now be clarified.

Just as the five families of Sambhogakāya Buddhas are said to be manifestations of Vairocana, the five wisdoms are said to arise from the essential wisdom which is known as

the Base abiding wisdom (gzhi-gnas-kyi-ye-shes). The five wisdoms are: 1) The wisdom of the phenomenal dimension (chos-dbyings-ye-shes), 2) The mirror like wisdom (me-long-lta-bu-ye-shes), 3) The equality wisdom (mnyam-nyid-ye-shes), 4) The distinction conceiving wisdom (so-sor-rtog-pa'i-ye-shes), and 5) The deed accomplishing wisdom (bya-grub-pa'i-ye-shes.[1]

When the PBD first discusses wisdom it presents these five wisdoms as well as other wisdoms, which are shown to be elucidations of different aspects of the Base abiding wisdom. The PBD presents wisdom in the following phrases:

> The essence of wisdom is that it is clear and non-conceptual. Furthermore, the naturally pure Base abiding wisdom is insubstantial and penetrating. When correlated with the kāya it is the Dharmakāya. When correlated with awareness it is the essence (ngo-bo).
>
> Son of Noble Family, its existential mode abides as light, so when it is correlated with the kāya it is the Rūpakāya. When correlated with wisdom it is the five characteristic grasping wisdoms (mtshan-nyid-'dzin-pa'i-ye-shes).

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1. PBD, p.30.

The mode of appearance [is that it] appears without an exterior or interior, thus it is unobscured clear wisdom.

Furthermore, its pure nature transcends the extreme of permanence. Its existential mode as light transcends the extreme of cessation. Its mode of appearance is without exterior and interior, so it is pure of the extreme of subject and object.

This is the essence of wisdom.

The definition is that unmistaken knowledge (shes-pa) of the meaning which exists from the primordial is wisdom.

If all samsara and nirvana appear from this great, penetrating, primordially pure, insubstantial awareness, it is the Base abiding wisdom. This [wisdom] abides in the empty (stong-pa), so it is the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension. The empty exists ('dug) as unhindered awareness, thus it is the mirror wisdom. This empty itself is awareness, and this awareness itself is empty. As the empty and awareness are not divided they are the equality wisdom. The empty and awareness are without duality and [yet] are known distinctly, thus there is the

distinction conceiving wisdom. The wisdom of insubstantial awareness is not a material thing, thus there is the Wide Door of Good Quality. Force (rtsal) comes forth without any obstruction whatever, without direction. Thus there is the deed accomplishing wisdom.

. . .

Kye Ma Ho! Son of Noble Family, this sort of knowledge (shes-pa) is aware of its own self-awareness (rang-gis-rang-rig-pa), thus there is the self-aware wisdom.

There is no creator of [wisdom], thus it is the self-arising wisdom.

There is no transcending its meaning, so it is the transcendent heart wisdom.

To teach the similes: A simile (dpe) for the Base abiding wisdom is that it brings forth everything, like a precious jewel.

The [simile] for the mirror wisdom is that it is like sparkling water or a polished mirror.

That for the equality wisdom is the simile for the equality of the three times: It is like a river.

The simile for the non-dual wisdom is that it is like gold and yellow.

> The simile for the distinction conceiving wisdom is that it is like the arising of the planets and stars at sea.
>
> The simile for the deed accomplishing wisdom is that it is like the wind and the sun.
>
> The simile for the non-abiding wisdom is that it is like the moon [reflected on] water.
>
> The simile for the self-aware wisdom is that it is like crystal and light.[2]

This passage not only mentions the five wisdoms, it also talks about other aspects of the Base abiding wisdom. In the body of the text, however, it is the five wisdoms that receive the greatest attention. A passage that identifies these five wisdoms and their interrelationship follows:

> The essence of awareness exists (_'dug_) as the empty, thus it is the emptiness wisdom (_stong-pa-nyid-kyi-ye-shes_). This empty awareness itself is unhindered clarity, so it is the mirror like wisdom. Awareness is without the duality of the empty and the clear; these two are equal, so there is the

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2. PBD, pp.31-33.

> non-dual equality wisdom. Awareness is the essence of this, and from the perspective (bltas) of the direction of the empty it is clear as the empty. From the perspective of the direction of clarity it exists as clarity. From the perspective of the direction of non-duality it is non-dual. From such unhindered individual aspects it is the distinction conceiving wisdom. All deeds are unobstructedly accomplished by the force of realizing this meaning; it is the deed accomplishing wisdom. Non-intuition of these five arises as the five poisons.[3]

In this passage the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension has been replaced by the emptiness wisdom. This is in order to elucidate the relationship between awareness, emptiness, and clarity. The PBD is generally consistent in its enumeration of the five wisdoms, with the exception of the first wisdom which is sometimes referred to as the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension and sometimes as the emptiness wisdom. The statement that the five poisons (of attachment, aversion, ignorance, pride, and jealousy) are the non-intuition of the five wisdoms, though not elaborated further in the PBD, deserves further inquiry.

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3. PBD, p.101.

The connection between the five wisdoms and the five poisons is common to the traditions of Tantric Buddhism. Keith Dowman has presented this connection in his book Sky Dancer.[4] There he states that the poison connected with the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension is ignorance. That connected with mirror like wisdom is aversion. That connected with the equality wisdom is pride. That connected with the distinction conceiving wisdom is attraction. That connected with the deed accomplishing wisdom is jealousy.

The PBD does not present any method of finding the five wisdoms within the five poisons, nor does it recommend any practice that would turn the five poisons into wisdom. It does state, as above, that the five poisons are the failure to recognize or intuit the five wisdoms, which is delusion.

The five Sambhogakāya Buddhas, as mentioned in the previous chapter, are manifestations of the five wisdoms. This relationship is described in the following passage from the PBD:

> All things arise and appear from awareness, the single essence, thus it is also called "The Great All-Appearance" (kun-snang-chen-po). Self-awareness is unhindered good quality, so it is explained as "The Great Self-arising. It is Amitābha, endowed

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4. Dowman, Sky Dancer, p.193.

with the power of compassion. It is unobstructed profound knowledge, so is Amoghasiddhi. This [awareness] itself is unchanging, so is Aṣobhya. The essence of the five kāyas of profound knowledge is the unobstructed non-dual empty awareness wisdom (stong-pa-rig-pa-gnyis-med-ye-shes).[5]

In scattered references throughout the text the PBD correlates the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas with the five wisdoms.[6] These passages can be summarized by noting that Vairocana is the manifestation of the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension or emptiness wisdom; Akṣobhya represents the mirror like wisdom; Ratnasambhava represents the equality wisdom; Amitābha represents the distinction conceiving wisdom; and Amoghasiddhi represents the deed accomplishing wisdom.

In the discussion of the Sambhogakāya in the previous chapter of this thesis it was shown that from the indivisibility of reality and the Dharmakāya wisdom manifests as the five colors of light, which in turn manifests as the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas. Each wisdom and Sambhogakāya Buddha is associated with a particular color of light. The simile used in the PBD for this relationship is

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5. PBD, p.57.

6. See in particular PBD, pp.66-68.

that of a crystal and the rainbow it produces.[7] When a crystal is held in the sunlight a rainbow is projected forth. The rainbow is not the same as the crystal, nor can it be separated from the crystal. The Dharmakāya is like the crystal while the five Sambhogakāyas are like the light-rays that issue forth from it. The following passage clearly presents the relationships between the five wisdoms and the five colors of light:

> The self-luminescence (rang-gdangs) of the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension as light (chos-dbyings-'od-kyi-ye-shes) is clear from the state of the empty as azure. The self-luminescence of the mirror wisdom is clear from the state of the unhindered as white. The self-luminescence of the equality wisdom is clear from the state of the inseparable as yellow. The self-luminescence of the all conceiving wisdom is clear from the state of the knowledge of thusness as red. The self-luminousity of the deed accomplishing wisdom is clear from unhindered space as green. These five arise in the space of reality.[8]

Nowhere in the PBD does it state the actual colors of

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7. PBD, p.116.

8. PBD, p.34.

the Sambhogakāya Buddhas. This information may be derived, however, from the relationships of the wisdoms to the colors and the wisdoms to the Buddhas. Vairocana as a manifestation of the wisdom of the phenomenal dimension would be azure. Akṣobhya as mirror like wisdom would be white. Ratnasambhava as the equality wisdom would be yellow. Amitābha as the distinction conceiving wisdom would be red. Amoghasiddhi as the deed accomplishing wisdom would be green.

The PBD holds that these five wisdoms are manifest throughout reality, though due to delusion they may not be perceived. In particular, the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and sky are in fact the five wisdoms. The PBD does not, however, correlate the elements with their specific wisdoms. The PBD also holds that the body of a human or other living being is in fact a conglomeration of the five wisdoms in their nature as light. This is stated as follows:

> Flesh and bones are from white light. The bile and pus are from yellow light. Blood and warmth are from red light. Breath is from green light. The comfort of the body is from azure light.[9]

In the chapter on delusion it was pointed out that the

9. PBD, p.53.

body is one of the three bases for delusion. The present elucidation demonstrates that the body can also be a basis for the intuition of wisdom, if it seen in its nature as light rather than taken to be merely a material reality.

The PBD also holds that the five wisdoms are actually none other than the three kāyas. This is demonstrated in the following passage:

> There is no division between the five wisdoms and the meaning of the three kāyas. The empty aspect of reality, clear awareness, and the non- dual aspect are the essence of the Dharmakāya. The two [Rūpa]kāyas are unhindered force, and light comes forth from the unhindered individual aspects. This itself is the essence of the Sambhogakāya. The enactor of the purpose of living beings with compassion, the Nirmāṇakāya, is the deed accomplishing wisdom. The three kāyas and five wisdoms are spontaneously realized in the state of the Dharmakāya.[10]

If the exposition in the PBD required rational consistency this statement would be impossible, for the five wisdoms have already been shown to manifest as the five Sambhogakāya Buddhas. If this passage were correlated with

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10. PBD, p.102.

the previous statements it would follow that Vairocana, Akṣobhya, and Ratnasambhava are in fact Dharmakāyas, Amitābha would be the only Sambhogakāya, and Amoghasiddhi would be a Nirmāṇakāya. Such a position runs counter to the identification of the five Buddha families as manifesting on the Sambhogakāya level. This statement must therefore be taken to represent a totally different way of looking at the wisdoms, where the principles of emptiness, clarity, and non-duality are held to reflect the true nature of pure awareness (the Dharmakāya), the ability to distinguish these separate aspects represents the division of pure awareness into aspects (the Sambhogakāya), and the fact that all deeds issue forth from the state of pure awareness represents the principle of compassion in action (the Nirmāṇakāya).

The fact that the five wisdoms can be seen in these two different presentations must be taken as an encouragement to the reader not to pigeon-hole or reify the five wisdoms as being definite "things." In the chapter on recognition I will discuss how the PBD advises the direct intuition of these wisdoms in oneself as a means for eliminating delusion. First, however, it is necessary to investigate the PBD's presentation of the different Buddhist paths, their merits and faults.

CHAPTER 7

The Path

In the preceding chapter I have discussed the fundamental concepts that are dealt with in the PBD. It remains to discuss the PBD's treatment of the Buddhist path, the actual application of the previously discussed themes to the spiritual quest, and a summary of the PBD's statements regarding the highest mode of spiritual being, the Great Perfection. This chapter will discuss the path.

The Vajrayāna tradition of Buddhism has been subdivided in the Tibetan tradition into two main branches: 1) The "Old School" (rnying-ma) which represents the Buddhist tradition in its early diffusion in Tibet (6th-9th centuries C.E.), and 2) The "New Schools" (gsar-ma) which represent the traditions promulgated during the later spread of Buddhism in Tibet (10th century onwards C.E.).[1] There are generally

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[1] On the Old and New Schools see this thesis, p.16.

held to be three "New Schools." These are the dGe-lugs-pa, the Sa-skya-pa, and the bKa'-rgyud-pa.

There is a fundamental difference between the Old School and the New Schools in their presentation of the tantric systems. The New Schools present the tantras under four subdivisions. These are: 1) Kriya-yoga, 2) Carya-yoga, 3) Yoga-yoga, and 4) Anutara-yoga.[2] The Old School divides the Buddhist path into nine levels, referred to as vehicles (theg-pa, Skt. yāna). This nine vehicle system does not limit itself to the tantric systems, but includes them. As an Old School text, the PBD maintains the nine vehicle subdivision of the Buddhist paths. This division is enumerated as follows: 1) The Auditor vehicle, 2) The Pratyeka-buddha vehicle, 3) The Bodhisattva vehicle, 4) The Kriya-yoga vehicle, 5) The Carya-yoga vehicle (which is also known as Upa-yoga), 6) The Yoga-yoga vehicle, 7) The Mahā-yoga vehicle, 8) The Anu-yoga vehicle, and 9) The Ati-yoga vehicle (which is also known as the Great Perfection, rdzogs-chen).

Namkhai Norbu has elucidated the status of these views in the rNying-ma school very clearly:

> In the rNying ma pa school, there is a nine-fold division of spiritual pursuits:

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[2] These four levels of tantra are thoroughly discussed in Mkhas Grub Rje's Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, op. cit., pp.101-271.

> the three ordinary pursuits -- that of gods and men, of the Śravakas [Auditors] and Pratyeka-buddhas, and of the Bodhisattvas; the three outer tantras -- Kriya, Carya, and Yoga; and the three inner, unsurpassable pursuits -- Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. Among these, the three ordinary pursuits primarily teach the way of renunciation (spong lam); the three outer tantras teach primarily the way of purification (sbyong lam); and the three inner tantras primarily the way of transformation (sgyur lam).[3]

The PBD refers to the first eight of these spiritual pursuits as "the eight vehicles." As a text representing the Ati yoga, or Great Perfection, the PBD is explicit in rejecting these eight vehicles as a truly effective means to realize the definitive meaning of the Buddhist teaching. The following passage makes this clear:

> The Auditors, Pratyekabuddhas, and Bodhisattvas, the three classes of Kriya, Upa and Yoga [Tantras], and both generation [the Mahayoga] and perfection [the Anuyoga] grasp the truth from a single direction. They are

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3 Manjusrimitra, Primordial Experience, Trans. Namkhai Norbu and Kennard Lipman, (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), introduction by Namkhai Norbu, p.x.

> the eight views which go together with astrological divination. The mind holds to dualistic extremes. They do not speak of the wisdom of self-awareness. Thus they are perverted, for they fail and err in the meaning. They are views which hold to an attitude of attached posturing.[4]

Despite this statement, the PBD does not ignore these eight vehicles. There is a considerable discussion of the nature, content, and effects of each view along with the superiority of each view over the ones preceding it. A presentation of these vehicles will not only help to understand the rNying-ma school's delineation of the various versions of the Buddhist path, it will provide a ground-work from which the explanation of the Great Perfection will become more meaningful.

The PBD devotes ten chapters to an analysis of the nine vehicles.[5] These chapters are devoted to discussions of the vehicles with reference to specific points about each one. In my summary of these statements I have gathered the separate statements on each of the vehicles in order to provide a concise insight into each vehicle from every perspective that the PBD offers. The PBD does not discuss

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[4] PBD, p.80.

[5] Chapters 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 70, 76, 77, 79, and 80 of the PBD are devoted to discussion of the nine vehicles.

every vehicle with every topic presented, yet there is enough information on each vehicle to provide an insight into what it is.[6]

The present state of scholarship on the nine vehicles of the rNying-ma school is very limited. For this reason I will quote extensively from the PBD on its discussion of these topics, preferring to let the PBD speak for itself on this subject. In place of commentary and analysis I have attempted to provide clarifying footnotes.

The first of the nine vehicles is the Auditor vehicle. These are the PBD's comments upon it:

> The Auditor vehicle is so called because [its propounders] posit subject and object as two things."[7]
>
> The Auditor [vehicle] is superior to both non-intuition and perverse intuition. Further, if you ask how it is superior, the view is superior because it intuits the selflessness of individuals. The practice is superior because it enacts the ten virtues for one's own purpose. The attainment is superior because it is accomplished through

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[6] My explication of the nine vehicles relies entirely on the PBD. For a summarized account of the nine vehicles see Tucci, Religions of Tibet, pp.76-87.

[7] PBD, p.181.

the four [noble] truths. The result is superior because it is the attainment of the four pairs and eight units such as Arhatship.[8]

The graspable is clearly the relative truth (kun-rdzob). [They] hold the ultimate truth (don-dam) to be the stuff of minute atoms.[9]

Those who espouse the Auditor [vehicle] meditate in this way: They generate the conception toward their own body, the material psycho-physical constituent, that it is unclean matter. They meditate that [the body] is risky, decaying, rotten, and decomposed. They turn away from the extreme of longing for the psycho-physical constituent of form. They possess the twelve branches of peaceful abiding (zhi-gnas), and reject the objects of the six consciousnesses

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8 PBD, p.188. The four pairs are the same as the eight units. They are the attainments of Stream Winner (Srotāapatti), Once Returner (Sakṛdāgāmin), Non-returner (Anāgāmin), and Arhatship. Each of these four is subdivided into the obtaining of the state and the enjoyment of its fruits, which makes a total of four pairs or eight units. See Etienne Lamotte, Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, (Louvain: Institut Orientaliste, 1976), p.51.

9 PBD, p.80.

> along with conceptualizations.[10]
>
> The particulars of the Auditor practice are that they give up stealing and impure sexual practices. They give up killing. The pure practice of speech is practice without lying, gossip, slander, and cruel words. The pure practice of the mind is free from avariciousness, harmfulness, and perverse views. The ten virtues are enacted for one's own purpose.[11]
>
> The result for the Auditors is that when the end of view, meditation, and practice has been reached the results of the four pairs and eight units ripens.[12]

This concludes the PBD's remarks on the Auditor vehicle. The PBD's statements on the Pratyekabuddha vehicle follow:

> The definition of the name of the Pratyekabuddhas is that they are self-Buddhas because they practise with the power of their own skillfulness, without looking toward any

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10 PBD, p.82. The six consciousnesses are the consciousnesses of the five senses and the "mind-consciousness" (yid-kyi-rnam-shes, manovijñāna).

11 PBD, p.84.

12 PBD, p.85.

other teacher.[13]

The view of the Pratyekabuddhas is so called because they say "the existence of the subject is absent in the object."[14]

The Pratyekabuddhas are superior to the Auditors. The view is superior because it intuits selflessness in the single direction of the psycho-physical constituent of form, the realm of dharmas (chos-khams). The activity is superior because it enacts the purpose of living beings by some disproportionate miracles on top of the ten virtues. The attainment is superior because it is accomplished through the strength of skillfulness, without relying on a friend in virtue. The result is especially superior because it is like a parrot or a rhinoceros.[15]

The view posited by the Pratyekabuddhas certainly realizes the selflessness of individuals, just as the Auditors, but views selflessness in the realm of dharmas in a

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13 PBD, p.187.

14 PBD, p.182.

15 PBD, p.188.

single direction. [Pratyekabuddhas] hold marks to be certain, thus they fall from the meaning of the non-dual great bliss.[16]

Those who espouse the Pratyekabuddha vehicle meditate in this way: They meditate that from such things as ignorance at the first one finally meets with old age and death.[17] They focus the mind on their own forehead, then hold the mind on a white skeleton the size of a thumb and rest it there. Then they increase it until they view the skeleton in full size. Then they gradually meditate into cessation.[18]

The practice of the Pratyekabuddha enacts only part of the purpose of living beings by means of a few incongruous miracles.[19]

The result for the Pratyekabuddhas is that when the end of view, meditation and practice has been reached the two kinds of desired fruition are obtained, like a parrot or a

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16 PBD, p.81.

17 This refers to the twelve-fold chain of interdependence. See Richard Robinson and Willard Johnson, The Buddhist Religion, (California: Dickenson Publishing Co., 1977), pp.31-34.

18 PBD, p.82.

19 PBD, p.84.

rhinoceros for example.[20]

This concludes the PBD's statements on the Pratyekabuddhas. The vehicle of the Bodhisattvas is explained as follows:

> The definition of the name of the Bodhisattva is that [Bodhisattvas] possess renunciation, wisdom, compassion, and sacred action in a state of perfection, and declare the meaning of this to others.[21]
>
> The Bodhisattva is so called because they proclaim "the mind and the mind's aspects" and they proclaim "the ultimate truth is in the relative truth."[22]
>
> The Bodhisattva is superior to the Pratyekabuddha. The view is superior because it realizes the two kinds of selflessness. The practice is superior because it enacts the purpose [of others] by the four immeasurables.[23] The attainment is superior because it is accomplished through the ten

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20 PBD, p.85.

21 PBD, p.187.

22 PBD, p.182.

23 The four immeasurables are benevolence, compassion, delight, and equanimity. See Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, p.234.

perfections.[24] The result is superior because it mounts the level of Total Light (kun-tu-'od).[25]

The view of the Bodhisattva is the view free from the two selves [of individuals and of dharmas] and espouses the two truths in the proper way. The ultimate truth is viewed as the mind and the relative truth is not belittled, like a dream or illusion for example. [This view] errs from the meaning of the wisdom of non-dual great bliss.[26]

Those who espouse the Bodhisattva vehicle meditate in this way: They meditate with mental desire on mind only (sems-tsam), mind itself (sems-nyid), and self-clarity. They meditate on the undivided truth of the middle way (dbu-ma), like the center of the sky.[27]

The practice of the Bodhisattva is the

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[24] Herbert Guenther lists the ten perfections as follows: 1) liberality, 2) ethics and manners, 3) patience, 4) strenuousness, 5) meditative concentration, 6) discriminating awareness, 7) beneficial expediency, 8) devoted resolution, 9) power, and 10) transcending awareness. See Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, p.253, note 3.

[25] PBD, p.189.

[26] PBD, p.81.

[27] PBD, p.83.

> four immeasurables. [Bodhisattvas] act mainly for the purpose of others.[28]
>
> The result for Bodhisattvas is that when the end of view, meditation and practice has been reached the actual ten stages (bhumi)[29] are gradually purified and then they posit that they come to abide in the Total Light (kun-tu-'od).[30]

This completes the discussion of the three outer levels of spiritual practice from the PBD. These are also known as the levels of cause, because they take the perspective of the causes of spiritual progress as their basis. The next six levels are the vehicles of effect, because they take the result of the path as the basis of their perspective.[31]

The PBD's description of the Kriya yoga is as follows:

> The definition of the name of Kriya is that [its propounders] mainly teach ablution, purification, the planets and the constellations.[32]
>
> The view of the Krīya is so called because

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28 PBD, p.84.

29 The ten stages of the Bodhisattva path are described in Sgam-po-pa, Jewel Ornament, pp.239-257.

30 PBD, p.85.

31 PBD, p.196.

32 PBD, p.187.

[its propounders] posit that the three families are in accord with the ultimate truth in its entirety.[33]

The Kriya is superior to the Bodhisattva. The view is superior because it fully intuits that the ultimate reality is unborn and it views the self (bdag), which is relatively real, and the god (lha), which is wisdom, as subject and lord. The practice is superior because it enacts the three kinds of purity.[34] The attainment is superior because it is accomplished through the doors of skillfulness, transformation, and blessings (byin-rlabs). The result is superior because it is the attainment of the fruition of the

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33 The three Buddha families according to the Kriya system are the Tathāgata family, the Padma family, and the Vajra family. These are discussed in detail in Mkhas Grub Rje's Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems, pp.101-135.

34 The "three purities" (dag-pa-gsum) are listed in the Kun-byed rGyal-po'i mDo, rNying-ma rGyud-'bum (1973 edition), Vol. I, p.38 as the purities of the outer, inner, and conceptual. Mkhas Grub Rje, however, lists three methods of practice (rather than purity) used in the Kriya Tantra. His description is as follows: "There are three methods of procedure (anusthāna) in the Kriya Tantra, namely, meditation (dhyāna) accompanied by muttering (japa), meditation independent of muttering, and accomplishment of siddhi after appropriate service (seva). Buddhist Tantric Systems, p.159.

three families.[35]

The Kriya view is tied up with attached posturing, but does not waver from the state of the non-conceptual (mi-rtog) which is without birth or cessation. It views the [Bodhi]sattvas in two aspects, as lords and servants. It errs from the meaning of the all-good great bliss.[36]

Those who espouse the Kriya vehicle meditate in this way: After the gods of the empty (stong-pa'i-lha-tshogs) have gone away they meditate that they possess the mudras of the three families.[37]

The practice of Kriya is pure behavior in the three: External, internal, and material (rdzas).[38]

The perfection of the result of Kriya is the reason for their view and meditation. [Its practitioners] hold [this result] to be

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35 PBD, p.189.

36 PBD, p.81.

37 PBD, p.83. The word mudra in this case may refer either to the "seal" signified by the hand-gesture of the lord of the Buddha family or to the Mother of the Buddha family, the lord's consort and hence his mudra. Either meaning would nonetheless have a mystical -- rather than worldly -- significance.

38 PBD, p.84.

> the essence of the three families and three doors. They mount the level of rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa.[39]

This concludes the PBD's comments on Kriya-yoga. The next level of tantra is known variously as Carya-yoga and Upa-yoga. The PBD uses the term Upa-yoga, along with its derivative Upaya, for this level in every case. The PBD is also relatively silent on the subject of Upa-yoga, hence the smaller number of quotations.

> The definition of the name of the Upaya is that their practice comes upward from below and their view is turned downwards from above.[40]
>
> The view of the Upaya is so called because they posit the two aspects (cha-gnyis)[41]
>
> The Upa is superior to the Kriya. The view is superior because it views the god along with the master and servants. The practice is superior because it enacts the purpose of living beings via the existence

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[39] PBD, p.85.

[40] PBD, p.187.

[41] PBD, p.182. This may refer to the two forms of practice in the Carya Tantra, which according to Mkhas Grub Rje are Yoga with images and Yoga without images. Buddhist Tantric Systems, pp.207-215.

and non-existence of marks. The attainment is superior because it is accomplished through the four thusnesses (de-kho-na-nyid-bzhi).[42]

The Upaya espouses a view which does not waver from the state of the non-conceptual and is likewise free from birth and cessation. It views the two types of [Bodhi]sattvas as brothers and friends. It errs from the meaning of the undivided wisdom of great bliss.[43]

This concludes the PBD's discussion of the Upa-yoga vehicle. The Yoga vehicle follows.

The definition of the name Yoga is that one unites one's body, speech and mind to the natural state (rnal-ma), the meaning of which is the four families of Buddhas.[44]

Those who use words to posit the seven nerve channels (rtsa) of the mind are explained to be [holders of] the Yoga view.[45]

The Yoga is superior to the Upa. The view

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42 PBD, p.188.

43 PBD, p.81.

44 PBD, p.187.

45 PBD, p.182.

is superior because it views the relative reality as being in friendship with the god. The practice is superior because it enacts the four kinds of sacred action (phrin-las-rnam-bzhi).[46] The attainment is superior because it is the accomplishment of the four kinds of mudras.[47] The result is superior because it is the attainment of the Buddhahood of the five families.[48]

Those who posit the Yoga vehicle meditate in this way: After the five aspects of enlightenment (byang-chub-rnam-lnga) have passed away they meditate that the thirty-seven possess the four mudras.[49]

The practice of the Yoga vehicle is made to enact the four kinds of sacred action and

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[46] In the Bod-rgya Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo these are listed in Vol.2, p.1771 as: 1) Peace (zhi-ba), 2) Production (rgyas-pa), 3) Power (dbang), and 4) Wrath (drag-po).

[47] The four mudras are: 1) The Great Mudra, 2) The Mudra of Sacred Commitment, 3) The Dharma Mudra, and 4) The Karma Mudra. These are discussed extensively throughout Herbert Guenther's Royal Song of Saraha. Also see Mkhas Grub Rje's Buddhist Tantric Systems, pp.229-250.

[48] PBD, p.189.

[49] PBD, p.83. The five aspects of enlightenment are nowhere detailed in the PBD, nor does there appear to be an available external reference. The "thirty-seven" mentioned are also mysterious in this regard.

the four thusnesses (kho-na-nyid-bzhi).[50]

> The result of the Yoga is that the thirty-seven are actually perfected by the blessing (byin-rlabs) of view, meditation, and practice, and the three kayas are spontaneously realized by their own nature.[51]

This completes the PBD's discussion of the Yoga vehicle. The elucidation of the three inner tantras, beginning with the Maha-yoga vehicle follows:

> The definition of the name of the Mahayoga is that it chiefly uses the three: Meditative absorption, skillful means, and profound knowledge in order to engage in the meaning.[52]

> The Mahayoga is like the wide dominion of a king.[53]

> The forty-two [peaceful deities] and fifty-eight [wrathful deities], etc. are explained as the view of the Mahayoga.[54]

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50 PBD, p.84.

51 PBD, p.86.

52 PBD, p.187.

53 PBD, p.181.

54 PBD, p.182. The peaceful and wrathful deities are described in Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa's translation of Karma Lingpa's Tibetan Book of the Dead, (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1975), throughout.

The Maha is superior to the Yoga in four ways. The view is superior because it views one's own body as the maṇḍala of the victorious one. The practice is superior because it enacts the purpose of living beings by both union (sbyor) and liberation (sgrol). The attainment is superior because it is through both skillful means and profound knowledge. The result is superior because it is the mounting of the level of Total Light.[55]

Those who posit the Maha hold to marks. [Its propounders' view] is also unborn, without cessation, is non-conceptual, and is without wavering. They view the elements (dhatūs) and sense bases (āyatanas) as gods and goddesses. [This view] errs from the meaning of the unreified great bliss.[56]

The meditation of the Mahayoga is that after the three types of meditative absorption have gone away they create the meditation of the widely-diffused (rab-

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55 PBD, pp.189-190.

56 PBD, p.81. On the elements and sense bases see this thesis, p.81.

> 'byams) peaceful and wrathful [deities]. That which possesses the four mudras is the supreme meditation.[57]
>
> The practice of the Mahayoga is action which reaches the limit of the purpose of living beings through both skillful means and profound knowledge.[58]
>
> The result of the Mahayoga is that when the view and so forth have already come up, and the Great Mudra has already been perfected, [its practitioners] are actually realized on the eleventh level of Total Light.[59]

This concludes the description of the Mahayoga. The Mahayoga is known as the stage of generation (bskyed-rim) while the Anuyoga is known as the stage of perfection (rdzogs-rim).[60] The description of Anuyoga follows:

> The definition of the perfection of Anu is that it is perfection without generation and is application of the meaning of this.[61]

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57 PBD, p.83.

58 PBD, p.84.

59 PBD, p.86.

60 PBD, p.189.

61 PBD, p.187.

The Anuyoga is like a man and woman performing intercourse.[62]

Words expressing perfection without generation and words which speak of the dimension of reality and wisdom refer to the view of the Anuyoga.[63]

The Anu is superior to the Maha in four ways. The view is superior because it intuits that the dimension of reality and wisdom are non-dual. The practice is superior because it enacts wisdom in the dimension of enjoyment. The attainment is superior because it is the accomplishment of the five psycho-physical constituents, the five elements, and the five Buddha families in Father-Mother (yab-yum) form. The result is superior because it is the attainment of the level of the Unchanging Lotus (ma-chags-pad-ma).[64]

Those who meditate by positing the Anuyoga claim that after they have left behind proclamation of the essence (snying-po-brjod-

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62 PBD, p.181.

63 PBD, p.182.

64 PBD, p.190.

pa) the psycho-physical constituents are the four *mudras* of the god, like bubbles in water or taking a clay reliquary out from the mold, for example. They meditate on clarity for a mere instant. After they have entered the branches of meditative concentration the divisions of the actual practice are meditated in the same way. They attain the result which reaches the limit of the desired purpose.[65]

The situation of practice for the Anuyoga is that [its practitioner] acts in the way of non-duality. The two aspects of the dimension of reality and wisdom are [enacted] without duality.[66]

The result of the Anu is the need for pure views. [Its practitioners] mount the level of the totally perfect name of Vajrasattva. They abide on the level of the Unchanging Lotus Possessor (*ma-chags-pad-ma-can*).[67]

This concludes the PBD's discussion of the Anuyoga. It also concludes the discussion of the eight vehicles which

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65 PBD, p.83.

66 PBD, p.84.

67 PBD, p.86.

the PBD rejects as representing only the interpretable meaning (drang-don) of the Buddha's teaching. The ninth level is the Atiyoga or Great Perfection, and it is this level of Buddhist teaching that the PBD holds to be definitive. As the PBD is intimately concerned with the Atiyoga its discussion of this level receives much more attention than the other levels. The remainder of this thesis will be an elucidation of this Great Perfection.

First, in order to properly conclude this chapter, I will present the statements made in the PBD regarding the Atiyoga in its comparison with the other eight levels. In the following chapter I will present the PBD's explanation of the methods of reaching spiritual awareness or recognition (ngo-sprod). In the final chapter of this thematic study I will present a summary of the PBD's statements regarding the view, meditation, practice, and result of the Atiyoga. The final chapter of the thesis will then contain concluding remarks.

The PBD's statements regarding the Atiyoga in comparison with the other eight vehicles are as follows:

> The definition of the name of the yoga of Great Perfection is engagement by way of the non-dual. All the phenomenon of appearance and the world [are non-dual with] the primordially perfect Buddha, the

Dharmakāya.[68]

The Atiyoga is like a great garuda soaring in the sky.[69]

Words expressing the transcendence of deeds and searching, words which express the self-arising wisdom, the spontaneously realized Buddha, etc. refer to the view of the Great Perfection.[70]

The Ati is superior to the Anu in four ways. The view is superior because it views all appearance and the world as the Dharmakāya Buddha. The practice is superior because the purpose of living beings is enacted through the blessing of the Dharmakāya. The attainment is superior because it is accomplished without deeds or searching. The result is superior because it mounts the levels beginning at the thirteenth, the Great Collection of the Wheel (_'khor-lo-tshogs-chen_), on up to the twenty-first.[71]

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68 PBD, p.187.

69 PBD, p.181. The garuda is a mythical bird, like a very large eagle.

70 PBD, p.182.

71 PBD, p.190. No reference to the thirteenth level by

These statements on the Great Perfection will serve to introduce the reader to the level of spiritual understanding offered in the PBD. It will be noted that the Atiyoga is held to be "beyond deeds and searching." This statement indicates that from the point of view of the Great Perfection there is nothing to be done in order to attain realization. Nonetheless, the PBD does provide information on how to realize Buddhahood. This realization is called "recognition," for according to the PBD it is only the difference between recognizing all reality as Buddhahood and failing to recognize this that makes the difference between delusion and intuitive realization. Thus there is nothing really to be done in an active sense, but one must recognize the Buddhahood of oneself, others, and reality as a whole in order to comprehend the meaning of non-searching. The following chapter is devoted to the PBD's elucidation of recognition.

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this name nor to the higher levels up to the twenty-first is available.

CHAPTER 8

Recognition

At the beginning of the forty third chapter of the PBD, the Lord of Secrets poses a question of fundamental import. It reads as follows:

> O, O Blessed One, rDo-rje 'Chang, if the view, meditation, practice and final fruition of the eight vehicles are such, what are the stages of sacred instruction for entering the meaning of the Ati? All living and sentient beings have the three kāyas and five kinds of wisdom in themselves as part of themselves (rang-la-rang-chas), so how is it that all those individuals who enter the path do not intuit this? Nothing but the external object itself obscures reality, so how is it that they do not perceive this? I beg rDo-rje

'Chang to explain this.[1]

This question strikes right at the heart of the fundamental problem in Great Perfection philosophy. If everything is naturally pure Buddhahood why don't people realize it? rDo-rje 'Chang then goes on to explain that beings do not recognize the true state of things and hence wander on in delusion. As a remedy for this the PBD presents what it calls "the seven recognitions." It is with the intuitive realization of these recognitions that the force of delusion can be cut off.

The PBD is generally a very clear text, yet in its discussion of the recognitions it resorts to cryptic language. I will not, therefore, present extensive quotations from the PBD in this chapter, but will attempt to express the content of each recognition with only occasional quotations from the text.[2]

The seven recognitions are recognition of: 1) The five elements, 2) The three kayas, 3) The five wisdoms, 4) The eight consciousnesses, 5) The three times, 6) The four recognitions, and 7) The outer, inner, and secret.

It should be understood right from the beginning that the PBD does not recommend any active measures for reaching these recognitions. Each of the recognitions is, rather, a

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1 PBD, pp.86-87.

2 The PBD's discussion on recognition is found on pp.91-125.

description of its topic with the proviso that when this topic is intuitively realized there will be release from delusion. This is in accordance with the PBD's statements that the Great Perfection is beyond deeds and searching. The recognitions are therefore neither goals nor objects of spiritual practice, but rather indications of the state of realization itself. This is expressed clearly in the following quotation:

> There is nothing to do for the sake of that which has been done from the primordial, dwells in the present, and is unsought. There is nothing to stop it.[3]

1) Recognition of the Five Elements

The first of the seven recognitions is to recognize one's own essential nature in the true state of the five elements. The five elements are earth, water, fire, wind, and sky. The PBD divides each of the elements into its radiant and defiled aspect. The radiant aspect of the elements is their nature as light. The defiled aspect of the elements is their concretization under the influence of delusion into material reality. In the state of delusion beings perceive the five elements as real entities. With the recognition of their true nature as light comes release

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[3] PBD, p.123.

from this delusion. The five elements as hypostasis of reality are cut through.

In its description of this recognition the PBD first points out that reality is differentiated between the objects of the five senses, which are the external world, and consciousness and awareness, which are the internal world. The true objects of the five senses are combinations of light. This is referred to as the phenomenal dimension (chos-dbyings). It is when discursive conceptualizations based on subject/object duality are brought into play that the external world becomes concretized into real entities. Reality itself is both external and internal, as this passage states:

> In pure reality there is no dualistic appearance. It is taught as "both external and internal." There is no reification towards the meaning of reality; it is pure.[4]

The process whereby this pure reality is obfuscated into deluded appearance is described as follows:

> By the spreading forth of discursive conceptualizations coarse defilement is spread forth as the five kinds of elements. From the supreme Mt. Meru at the center [of the cosmos] down to small rocks, bits of

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[4] PBD, p.92.

> earth and bits of wood it is spread forth as the entity of the earth element. Thus it is coarse. From the ocean and great rivers on down to mere moistness, mere wetness, and a drop of water discursive conceptualization is spread forth as water. Thus it is coarse. From the burning of the great fire at [the end of] the aeon on down to the spark of rubbing sticks together discursive conceptualization is spread forth as fire. Thus it is coarse. From the great wind of the crossed-vajra (rdo-rje-rgya-gram) on down to the smallest breeze, movements are spread forth by discursive conceptualization as wind. Thus it is coarse. The four elements obscure the empty unreified reality.[5]

When this process of delusion is recognized for what it is an intuition of reality will come forth as light. This light is none other than the nature of the five wisdoms. Therefore by intuiting the true reality of the elements there is a clear perception of the nature of reality as wisdom. This is the recognition of the elements.

2) Recognition of the Three Kāyas

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[5] PBD, pp.92-93.

The second recognition is that of the three kāyas. This involves a recognition of each of the three kāyas, yet the PBD also holds that an intuition of the Dharmakāya alone automatically results in an intuition of all three kāyas.[6]

The recognition of the Dharmakāya is the intuition that it is pure awareness (rig-pa). This is stated clearly in the PBD:

> In the teaching of instant enlightenment awareness and the Dharmakāya are taught as a single essence. . . . The essence of self-awareness and the Dharmakāya is empty. This is the empty reality. This empty essence is itself clear. It abides in pure self-clarity. The force of clarity comes forth as the flickering wind and the appearing light. It arises as experience by the power of the flickering. The five lights arise as the force of the arising five wisdoms. These perfectly comprehend the three kāyas; the Dharmakāya is clear and non-conceptual.[7]

This statement not only shows the PBD's identification of awareness with the Dharmakāya, it points out that the three kāyas are spontaneously realized in the Dharmakāya.

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[6] PBD, p.100.

[7] PBD, p.96.

How is the Dharmakāya obscured? The PBD informs us that:

> When the phenomenal dimension is obscured by subtle and coarse defilements the Dharmakāya is not recognized, so co-emergent ignorance comes forth. [This ignorance] is spread forth as coarse discursive conceptualizations by causes and conditions. By these conditions the meaning of the three kāyas is not clear. The meaning of reality is also not clear and becomes spread forth as coarseness. The external object itself is obscured, and the particulars of the non-deluded come forth in this way.[8]

It is the intuition that pure awareness is Buddhahood itself that undercuts the process of delusion, and from this a full intuition of all the three kayas will manifest. The recognition of the Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya are therefore dependent on a recognition of the Dharmakāya.

The Sambhogakāya is recognized to be the five families of Buddhas, which are in fact manifestations of the five wisdoms. These five wisdoms are inherent in the Dharmakāya. This is explained as follows:

> The essence of the Sambhogakāya is that it is realized to be the five kinds of wisdom in

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[8] PBD, p.97.

> the meaning of the Dharmakāya which is without defilement and pure. The five wisdoms which are the arising of the force of the Dharmakāya arise as luminescence.[9]

The PBD also points out that "self-awareness possesses the five wisdoms, and luminescence itself arises as the five lights, thus it comes forth as the kāyas of the five families."[10]

What obscures the Sambhogakāya?

> Actually, subtle longing is the subtle obscurant of the Sambhogakāya. It is the ungiving (ma-ster) obscuring defilement against the perception of the Sambhogakāya.[11]

When luminescence, the clear aspect of the Dharmakāya, is perceived as the five lights (azure, white, yellow, red, and green) and these are intuited to be wisdom itself the Sambhogakāya will be recognized.

The recognition of the Nirmāṇakāya depends on intuition of the Dharmakāya and Sambhogakāya. The PBD describes the recognition of the Nirmāṇakāya very briefly with these words:

> The arising of the spontaneously realized

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9 PBD, p.98.

10 PBD, p.98.

11 PBD, p.99.

> luminescent light in clear and empty self-awareness, the Dharmakāya, is the Sambhogakāya. The arising of the force of these two to the face of the disciple appears as the kāya of the force of light and awareness. An appropriate appearance arises for the six [classes of] sentient beings, and it appears as the Nirmāṇakāyas such as the six sages.[12]

This passage informs us that the Nirmāṇakāya is a manifestation of awareness and wisdom in a form appropriate to the beings of samsara. This conformity to samsaric existence is the manifestation of the Buddha's compassion. Unlike the information on the Dharmakaya and Sambhogakaya, where practitioners may find their own awareness to be the Dharmakāya and their perception of color to be the wisdom of the Sambhogakāya, the PBD does not present any direct indication that a practitioner may discover him or herself to be a Nirmāṇakāya. It is said, on the other hand, that with the intuition of the Dharmakāya will come a full recognition of all three kāyas. This may be taken to be an indication that with the intuition of the Dharmakāya Buddhahood itself is actually realized. One who realizes Buddhahood yet continues to remain in the world of

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[12] PBD, p.100.

appearance may be said to be a Nirmāṇakāya, and it is in this sense that practitioners may find their status as Nirmāṇakāya Buddhas.

Furthermore, the three kāyas -- though not recognized -- are actually present in the body, speech and mind of ordinary living beings. The following statement clarifies this:

> At the time the Dharmakāya is recognized the three kāyas are recognized. If you ask why, the three kāyas are spontaneously realized, therefore the un-intuited three kāyas are the body (lus), speech (ngag), and mind (yid). At the time of intuition the three kāyas arise at one time. All three are perfected at one time in the Dharmakāya. If you ask why, it is because it is spontaneously realized.[13]

It is in this connection that it will be useful to present the definitions of the three kāyas offered by Herbert Guenther. Dr. Guenther focuses on the three kāyas in their interrelationship with persons, and it is therefore under the present discussion of recognition -- rather than the previous chapter delineating the three kāyas -- that I offer his presentation.

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[13] PBD, p.100.

Dharmakāya (chos-sku) is a term for the experience of Being in one's own existence (sku) in the sense that Being is an absolute reality and value (chos). The experience is 'ineffable' in the sense that any attempt to conceptualize it would detract from its validity of absoluteness by reducing it to some content in mind which is relative to other contents. 'Ineffable' therefore does not mean that 'ineffability' is a quality of Dharmakāya. The experience of Being operates through Sambhogakāya (longs-sku) and Nirmāṇakāya (sprul-sku), both of them referred to by the term Rūpakāya (gzugs-sku). Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya are thus images through which we understand our existential value of Being. In particular, Sambhogakāya is an empathetic experience through which we take empathetic delight in Dharmakāya or Being. Nirmāṇakāya 'expresses' this experience in such a way as to communicate it to others. Dharmakāya is also used as a term for Being-as-such in which all that is participates and by virtue of it is.[14]

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14 Herbert Guenther, The Tantric View of Life, (Berkeley: Shambhala, 1972), pp.148-149, note 13.

Dr. Guenther does not employ such terms used in the PBD as "awareness," "light, "luminosity," etc. Yet his emphasis on the three kayas as being directly related to the ground of experience of a person is in harmony with the PBD's exegesis.

3) Recognition of the Five Wisdoms

The third recognition is that of the five wisdoms. It has already been pointed out in the chapter on wisdom that the five wisdoms represent the emptiness, clarity, non-duality, differentiation, and manifest force of awareness. It was also pointed out that the five wisdoms are in fact the three kāyas.

What obscures the five wisdoms? The PBD states that the five poisons of attachment, aversion, ignorance, pride, and jealousy are the coarse obscurants of the five wisdoms. Grasping is the subtle obscurant. Non-recognition is the very subtle obscurant.[15]

The point of recognizing the five wisdoms, therefore, is to distinguish them from the five poisons. This discrimination amounts to recognition.

The PBD holds that both wisdom and the poisons arise from the same fundamental state, which is called the Self-arising Wisdom. Under the influence of non-recognition or

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[15] PBD, p.101.

delusion these proceedings from the basic state of wisdom are either identified with the five wisdoms or felt as the poisons which hold one in samsara.[16] When there is recognition of the Self-arising Wisdom and understanding of the differentiation between the five wisdoms and the five poisons delusion is cleared away. This is the recognition of wisdom.

4) Recognition of the Eight Consciousnesses

The fourth recognition is that of the eight consciousnesses. These are the five consciousnesses of the sense faculties, the mental consciousness (yid-kyi-rnam-shes), the defiled mind (nyon-mongs-kyi-yid), and the Total Base which gathers the many things.

In the chapter on the Base, the Total Base which gathers the many things was identified with all eight of the consciousnesses, while here -- at the point of recognition -- it is identified only with the eighth consciousness.

The PBD explains the functions of the five consciousnesses of the senses in the following passage:

> Form is seen as the object of the eye. Attachment and aversion are born towards beautiful and ugly forms. In the same way sound is the object of the ear; smell is the object of the nose; taste is the object of

[16] PBD, p.102.

> the tongue; touchables are the object of the body, etc. [The consciousnesses] act like servants, for they carry [their contents] to the mental consciousness, like being sent to a lord.[17]

The explanation of how sensory input is then processed by the remaining three consciousnesses follows:

> [Sense data] are carried to the defiled mind. They are grasped firmly by such defilements as attachment and aversion, like a husband looks after a wife after acquiring her. By this they turn into tendencies (bag-chags). The Total Base which gathers these [tendencies], which is like a vessel, is the Total Base which gathers the many things.

In relation to the five senses, the PBD speaks of the five "doors." The doors referred to are the sensory organs. The sense consciousnesses seize hold of the data intercepted by the sense faculties and relay this information to the mental consciousness. The defiled mind then interprets the data in terms of the five poisons. The tendencies this defiled interpretation harbors are held in the Total Base which gathers the many things.

It is clear, therefore, that the objects of perception

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[17] PBD, p.103.

do not become interpreted in terms of subject and object until they are received by the mental consciousness, which interprets its data in terms of internal and external. This is the fundamental delusion of subject-object duality. In the realm of the defiled mind the poisons come into play, and it is here that grasping at a true identity or "self" (bdag) with reference to the sense data and the receptor of the sense data appears. The consciousness that perpetuates the tendencies towards this deluded vision of reality is the Total Base which gathers the many things.

The recognition of the eight consciousnesses in nothing more or less then an understanding intuition of how this process takes place.[18] When the workings of the mind are clearly perceived there will no longer arise the grasping attitude that delusion is inherent in reality. The delusion of the mind will dissolve upon recognition of the nature of the mind.[19]

5) Recognition of the Three Times

The fifth recognition is that of the three times. The PBD holds that "the recognition through dividing the three times is inconceivable for an ordinary person."[20]

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[18] PBD, p.104.

[19] PBD, p.105.

[20] PBD, p.108.

Nonetheless it provides teaching on this subject. The recognition of the three times is divided between the pure knowledge of the three times and the timeless knowledge of intuition.[21]

The two knowledges of the three times are explained as follows:

> If the knowledge of the three times is recognized there are the knowledge that the past cuts off the future, the knowledge that the future meets with the past, and the knowledge that the five sensory bases which issue forth in the present are lost into the object. This is the knowledge that recollection and conceptualization are adventitious. The knowledge that the past cuts off the future is recollected in the mind which creates the past. The knowledge that the future meets the past is recollected in the mind of the future. The adventitious recollection and conceptualization of the present is generated in the objects of the five senses. . . . These are the phenomena of samsara, and by the knowledge that these three are adventitious there come forth the

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[21] PBD, p.109.

> three times which are selfless, free from grasping, uncreated, uncontrived, uncontaminated, self-arising, and abiding from the primordial. Knowledge of just this is wisdom.[22]

This passage represents the teaching on the three times in full. It is apparent that an intuitive awareness of the past, present and future leads to the primordial awareness which is beyond time altogether. This is the recognition of the three times.

6) Recognition of the Four Recognitions

The sixth recognition is the four recognitions. The four recognitions are recognition of the Dharmakāya, of the Sambhogakāya, of the Nirmāṇakāya, and that the three kāyas are without joining or separation. This recognition differs from that of the three kāyas only in its presentation. In this teaching the PBD uses what it calls "the four signs of signification" (mtshon-pa'i-brda). These are: 1) Vajrasattva's mirror, 2) A mask, 3) A house of light, and 4) The sun. The PBD offers a speech or lecture which should be given to the student in order to teach each of these recognitions. The speech on Vajrasattva's mirror follows:

> You suitable receptacle [for the teaching], student, listen to me! This

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22 PBD, p.109.

> mirror of the mind, this crystal, is not truly the Dharmakāya. How must this be known? Just as there is no exterior or interior to a crystal, the Dharmakāya of self-awareness must be known to have no exterior or interior. Just as a crystal has no front or back the Dharmakāya also has no front or back. Just as a crystal has penetrating clarity the Dharmakāya is undefiled, pure, and penetrating. Just as the unconditioned five lights are inside, so this which has no interior, the three kāyas, abides in inner clarity inside the penetrating Dharmakāya. You must know that this is the empty with the vital essence of wisdom. A simile is that just as the five lights arise on the outside from the inside of this [crystal], so the two Rūpakāyas appear for the two [sorts of] disciples from the Dharmakāya.[23]

The presentation on the Sambhogakāya, which uses the mask as a simile, is as follows:

> Son of Noble Family, listen to this! The instructions on the Sambhogakāyas are that

[23] PBD, p.111.

just as when a mask is shown in the face of a mirror yet the mirror is pure and clear, reality is pure and clear. Just as the appearance of an image inside a mirror is without self nature, so the appearance of the five kāyas in the dimension of reality is without self nature and abides in clarity.[24]

The speech on the Nirmāṇakāya, which should use the simile of a house of light yet in fact uses the simile of a lamp reflected on water, is as follows:

> Oh Son of Noble Family, listen to this! Just as the mirror of speech is pure and clear at the time the Nirmāṇakāya is applied to signs and speech, just as the dimension of the lamps which are reflected on water is clear as the five kāyas in the face of a mirror, the wisdom of signs (rtags-kyi-ye-shes) is clear as light, as the Nirmāṇakāya.[25]

The lecture on the inseparability of the three kāyas finishes the four speeches.

> Kye Ma, Lord of Secrets, take it as certain! Just as the essential nature of the

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[24] PBD, p.112.

[25] PBD, p.112.

> sun is together with its light rays, the Dharmakāya is ornamented by the compassionate Rūpakāya. Just as the light rays of the sun are free from duality, the three kāyas abide from the primordial without joining or separation.[26]

The PBD goes on to say that "when this is intuited there is Buddhahood, so the Buddha Aware of All Aspects (rNam-pa Kun-rig) is supreme. This is the inspiration of the four recognitions."[27]

The fundamental difference between the presentation of the recognition of the three kāyas and the recognition of the four recognitions is that the latter uses similes to elucidate its subject. It is also apparent that these four speeches are actually intended to be delivered to students by a guru. In this respect these passages are unique in the PBD. The PBD does not provide any directions to the guru for making these presentations, yet it is not unlikely that the guru would use such props as a crystal, a mirror, etc. in delivering these sermons.

The last of the seven recognitions is that of the outer, inner, and secret. "The recognition of the outer, inner, and secret is the final settlement of the

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26 PBD, p.112.

27 PBD, p.114.

recognitions. It is applied to the meaning of the view."[28] The recognition of these is explained very concisely in the PBD:

> The recognition of the outer is the recognition of appearance, the phenomenal dimension. The teaching on the recognition of the inner is the recognition of the two Rūpakāyas. The teaching on the recognition of the secret is the recognition that awareness is the Dharmakāya.[29]

The PBD then offers a unique passage. It was said above that the Atiyoga is beyond all deeds and searching and that nothing can be done to accomplish what is complete from the primordial. Nonetheless, in this one instance the PBD does recommend action as a means to gain recognition. The passage reads as follows:

> Show a crystal to the cloudless rising sun and set out an icon (<u>bris-sku</u>). Lift up the crystal to the sun, and set out the icon where the light spreads out. When both the crystal and the icon hit the unmoving eye, look. Look at the picture and look at the sky. You must look when it enters the mind

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28 PBD, p.115.

29 PBD, p.115.

> that the sunlight hits the crystal and the icon has color and form. Look at the sky which is empty of both eye and cloud. What is the icon? The color and shape actually appear to the eye-sense, but they arise without self-nature.[30]

After this passage the PBD offers various explanations of the three kāyas, all of which conform to the information already provided in this thesis. An example is the following:

> Through the aspect of awareness there is the Dharmakāya. Through the aspect of the appearance of light by means of the unhindered aspect of form, its clarity, there is the Sambhogakāya. Through the aspect of flickering recollection and awareness the five sense organs variously flicker in the object. These are the Nirmāṇakāyas.[31]

Each of the seven recognitions is intended to provide an insight into the nature of reality as the Great Perfection tradition sees it. Upon gaining any or all of these recognitions the follower is expected to have realized the definitive meaning of the Buddha's teaching. In the

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30 PBD, p.116.

31 PBD, p.117.

discussion of the nine vehicles we have seen that each Buddhist path is divided into view, meditation, practice, and result. Upon gaining recognition one has truly entered the vehicle of the Great Perfection. This vehicle is also discussed in terms of its view, meditation, practice, and result. The following chapter, the last in this thematic study of the PBD, will devoted to an exposition of these aspects of the Atiyoga.

CHAPTER 9

The Great Perfection

In the previous chapters I have presented the fundamental concepts that the PBD is built upon. In the chapter on the nine vehicles I have shown the PBD's views on the different Buddhist paths. In the chapter on recognition I have shown the PBD's analysis on the true entrance into the highest vehicle, the sudden penetration of reality. This highest vehicle, the ninth, is the Atiyoga, also known as the Great Perfection. The PBD is quite clear in its statements that recognition constitutes the highest view. Nonetheless, a large and important part of the PBD is devoted to a discussion of the view, meditation, practice, and results of the Great Perfection vehicle.

The Great Perfection vehicle is held by the PBD to be the highest Buddhist path. An elucidation of this path is the fundamental purpose of the PBD. For this reason the present chapter is devoted to a presentation of the view,

meditation, practice, and results of the Great Perfection according to the PBD. The information provided in the previous chapters of this thesis will now serve as a framework in which the PBD's views on Atiyoga can be properly understood.

Concerning the relationship between recognition and the view the PBD states the following:

> At the occasion of recognition of the view there is clarity. Upon recognition, realized intuition immediately arises. If you ask why, it is the teaching of sudden penetration. Therefore recognition is extremely dear.[1]

Why is the view so important? The PBD explains this as follows:

> Concerning the teaching on the necessary purpose of the view: The view is like an eye; everything is clear. It is impossible for persons who do not have the view to obtain Buddhahood. Without the view it is impossible to remove the darkness of ignorance. If one practises meditation without the view it will be to no purpose. Engaging in practice without the view is

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[1] PBD, p.135.

> devoid of a reason for practice. Without the view it is impossible to be liberated from the abode of samsāra. Without the view it is impossible to be liberated from suffering. Without the view it is impossible to obtain the great bliss. Therefore the requirement of the view is extremely great.[2]

Just what, then, is the view? The PBD's presentation of the definition of the view is a follows:

> The definition of the view is self-aware wisdom (rang-rig-ye-shes). "Self" (rang) is said because it need not rely on another. "Aware" (rig) is said because it is different from material things. Its time is called "primordial" (ye) as it does not come forth adventitiously. This itself is the knowledge (shes) of the meaning and the recognition.[3]

This statement is elucidated by the following remark:

> By a lucid intuition of the apparent reality of the phenomenal dimension and the self-arising, self-aware Dharmakāya there is the view. If this itself is suddenly recognized there will arise in this ordinary

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[2] PBD, p.130.

[3] PBD, p.128

> knowledge (shes-pa) startlement, lucidity, purity, thrill, distinctness, and holiness.[4]

To condense several passages relating to the view it may be said that awareness itself is empty, in that it can be in no way defined, and clear, in that perception is its quality. The empty aspect of awareness and the clear aspect are non-dual, in that the emptiness is itself clear and the clarity is itself empty. These three aspects, emptiness, clarity, and non-duality, can be conceived of separately. The manifest force of this awareness is action. This explanation represents the discussion of the five wisdoms, and the five wisdoms -- which are manifestations of the self-aware wisdom -- are the essence of the view.

The five wisdoms are also the three kāyas. The empty, clear, and non-dual aspects of awareness are the Dharmakāya. The distinction of these qualities of awareness is the Sambhogakāya. The manifest force of awareness is the Nirmāṇakāya.

Upon recognition that awareness is the Dharmakāya there is instant intuition of the five wisdoms and three kāyas. This intuition is exactly the view.

This intuition of the view also amounts to the abandonment of grasping, for the view is intuited directly and not in the manner of grasping or searching. With this

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[4] PBD, p.124.

abandonment of grasping comes the disappearance of subject-object duality and the five poisons. This is expressed in the PBD as follows:

> When there is no longing for the externally appearing object and the inner self-arising awareness is clear, this is called "the Dharmakāya of self-awareness." The meaning of everything is known by possessing the bliss of not conceptualizing the empty and the clear, and there is no subsequent grasping. This is called "the Dharmakāya of awareness."[5]

It is possible that the view be misunderstood. Such a misunderstand is called a "ground for error" (gol-sa) in the PBD. The PBD presents the ways that such misunderstandings are eliminated by the view as follows:

> The ground for error of [a belief in] cause and condition is cut off because [the view] is self-arising. The ground for error of it being an entity is cut off because it exists in the empty. The ground for error of it being empty is cut off because it exists as clarity. The ground for error of peaceful abiding (zhi-gnas) is cut off because

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[5] PBD, p.129.

> awareness is penetrating. The ground for error of awareness being alone is cut off because clarity arises as light. The ground for error of the stage of generation is cut off because [the view] abides as the uncontrived and uncontaminated. The ground for error of meditation is cut off because it is clear, without joining or separation. The ground for error of hoping for something else is cut off because it is exactly itself. The ground for error of cardinal and secondary directions is cut off because it arises without direction. The ground for error of the vehicles is cut off because it is the root of everything. The ground for error of study and thinking is cut off because it is intuited by the mere teaching. Other errors are impossible because one knows one's own true essence.[6]

These statements indicate that any hypostacization or objectification of the view results in a misconception. It may be thought, then, that these faults must be actively given up. This would also be a mistake, however, for it is recognition itself -- and not any overt act -- that removes

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[6] PBD. pp.130-131.

misconceptions about the view. The PBD states:

> The purification of faults is that they are not purposefully abandoned. Faults are purified by the intuition of their own essence, just as darkness does not abide when the sun rises, for example.[7]

It may also be thought that an individual who intuits the view, and hence obtains Buddhahood, also departs from samsara. The PBD does not negate this possibility, but offers another insight into the situation:

> An individual who knows and intuits these things may exist in the abode of saṃsāra but the result, the three kāyas, is perfected. [For him] there is no changing from the meaning of the five wisdoms. There is the actual arising of the meaning of the self-arising awareness. By having not the least bit of anguish one is like a great garuda soaring in the sky.[8]

The ultimate misconception of the view, however, is not in the realm of overt grasping. It is the conceptual holding of such concepts as Dharmakāya, clarity, emptiness, etc. to refer to real things. The summation of the view is

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[7] PBD, p.131.

[8] PBD, p.137.

that it is totally beyond even such concepts as Buddhahood. The PBD makes this very clear:

> The essential Dharmakāya of awareness, or what is called "self-arising wisdom" is, from the essence of self-awareness, the Dharmakāya without samsara and without nirvana; without the Base, without the path, without the result; without vehicles and without individuals; without any Dharma or non-Dharma whatever; without the cause and result of samsara; without any cause, which is taught to be the two ignorances and such things as the four conditions, whatever; without the result which is attraction, aversion, ignorance, pride, and jealousy; without defilements such as the five poisons; without the six classes of samsara's sentient beings; also without the five external elements, i.e. without earth, without water, without fire and wind; even the pure sky is mere designation. Thus there is no vessel [of the world] or contents [of sentient beings] whatever. Samsara is merely designated through delusion. There is no samsara and no nirvana. Buddha (sangs-rgyas) is designated through realization, but in the essence of

meaning, the Dharmakāya, there is no removing (sangs) and no increasing (rgyas). There is no defeat (bcom), no possessing (ldan), no transcendence ('das), [and hence no Blessed One (bcom-ldan-'das)]. There is no purity, no accomplishment, no being. There is no Thus (de-bzhin), no Gone One (gshegs-pa). There is no Arahat who has removed the defilements.

There is no abandoning to be abandoned, or attaining to be attained. There is not even an atom of the name that is called "Buddha." There is not the path he preaches or the vehicles. There are no nine vehicles, cause and result, outer and inner. There is no path of means and path of liberation. There is no gradual [enlightenment], nor instantaneous [enlightenment]. There is no meditation and non-meditation, practice and non-practice. There is no god, maṇḍala, meditative absorption, expansion or contraction.

There is no existence, non-existence, appearance, empty, single, plural, permanence, cessation, like, dislike, fame, infamy, finding, not finding, accomplishment,

> non-accomplishment, removing, non-removing, expanding, non-expanding, action, non-action, and so on whatever.[9]

These statements show that the view of the Great Perfection is ultimately beyond even the three kāyas, the five wisdoms, and the nine vehicles. In the highest view there is not even a Buddha or Buddhahood. There is also not the absence of the kāyas, the wisdoms, etc. The view of the Atiyoga is totally beyond any defined reality whatever. As the PBD states:

> Similes, characteristics, conventions, recognition, view, meditation, practice, result, delusion, intuition, and skillfulness, are mere designations for inferior minds as a suitable condition for the path.[10]

Thus the PBD, which set out from the beginning to speak of the unspeakable, now reasserts the inconceivability of the highest view. The information provided up to this point was merely to accommodate inferior intellects, while the intuition of the view of the Atiyoga is beyond even these lofty subjects.

If the view of the Atiyoga is completely unspeakable,

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[9] PBD, pp.145-146.

[10] PBD, p.145.

what can be said of the meditation of Atiyoga? The PBD presents the situation clearly:

> The non-dual great bliss that I [rDo-rje 'Chang] teach is completely pure of all the conventions of content and lack of content in meditation. For one possessing profound knowledge who intuits the meaning of self-awareness there is no joining to or separation from the state of non-dual great bliss. . . . This is taught for the purpose of those with very sharp senses. For those individuals of middling profound knowledge non-meditation is taught as meditation. For yogis whose force of profound knowledge is small non-meditation is taught to be non-Buddhahood.[11]

This passage shows that there are three levels of teaching meditation. For the superior there is no meditation or non-meditation, as they have intuited the nature of self-awareness. For the middling not meditating is taught to be the true meditation. For the inferior meditation is taught to be essential.

Therefore the PBD does not concern itself with providing teachings for superior and middling individuals.

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11 PBD, p.148.

It is for the inferior that the PBD speaks of meditation at all. This teaching intends to demonstrate that there is no entering or leaving the state of pure reality, the Dharmakaya of self-awareness. Meditation, in the view of the PBD, is awareness of the all-encompassing state of pure being. Thus the meditation of the Atiyoga is the understanding of the view of Atiyoga. The following passage applies this view of meditation to the activities of daily life:

> One sits, but one sits simply without wavering from the state of the self-appearance of reality. One moves, but one moves simply as the unhindered self-nature of the self-luminescence of wisdom, just as a butter lamp and the sun go along with their self-appearance. One sleeps, but one is joined to the force of the Base through the space of the unwavering state of reality, the state of penetrating awareness, and one dissolves into the natural Base. After defining marks are liberated into their own place they become the great joining to the meaning. One gets up, but one gets up in the unwavering state. Awareness is self-arising,

> and is clear as the naturally unhindered.[12]

The PBD is clear in stating that there is no joining to or separation from reality, yet in one sense one is constantly within the state of reality. This is exemplified as follows:

> No matter where a bird flies there is no place that transcends the sky. No matter where a fish swims it does not transcend the water. No matter where a man goes he does not transcend the earth. Just so, the well-endowed who possess intuition do not waver from the state of reality.[13]

The inferior, nonetheless, require some idea of what to do in meditation. The comments on this in the PBD vary, but the following is an excellent example:

> Son of Noble Family, the thing to be meditated is pure perfected Buddhahood. There is nothing other than the meaning of this. Self-awareness is exactly the Dharmakāya. All arisings are self-arising. Awareness, the Dharmakāya, arises as the empty, the unhindered, the inseparability of these two, the unhindered discriminative

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[12] PBD, p.150.

[13] PBD, p.150.

> awareness which knows this, and the unobstructedness of that, in short, the five characteristics. These five arise as the five wisdoms.[14]

This explanation of meditation is in harmony with the PBD's contention that the Atiyoga is beyond all deeds and searching. Nonetheless, the PBD does offer an explanation of meditation for the inferior. This meditation is divided into outer, inner, and secret. It may appear that the PBD is proposing a type of deed for the spiritual path, which would in turn mean that the practitioner is searching some unattained goal. This would be a misconception, for it is the PBD's contention that the goal is not something to be attained, but rather something to be recognized in the immediate present. The following passage makes this clear:

> The application of meditation is the Dharmakāya of self-awareness. It is intuited by the seven recognitions. It will enter the disposition as confidence, and if this meaning is continually clear it is applied meditation. If it is realized that awareness is the Dharmakāya the three kāyas are spontaneously realized. The five wisdoms are

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[14] PBD, p.151.

> also spontaneously realized.[15]

What are the meditations of the outer, inner, and secret, then? These teachings are given at the level of content in meditation, rather than contentless meditation; though in the highest meditation there is neither content nor lack of it.

> The outer [meditation] is relaxation of body, speech, and mind. It is remaining in the state of giving up deeds.[16]

This statement is very clear. The outer meditation is abandoning a straining attitude towards meditation, and hence the view. The inner meditation is more complicated. It involves the nerve channels (rtsa), winds (rlung), and Thigle[17] which are part of the tantric physiology of a human being. The passages describing this meditation are obscure, as are the passages relating the secret meditation. It is likely that these are techniques intended to be learned from a guru who holds the transmission for this teaching. Such a native expert not being available, I have attempted to portray these techniques based only on the text of the PBD

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15 PBD, p.157.

16 PBD, p.153.

17 Thig-le is a technical term that is very hard to translate. On one level it refers to the semen. On another level it represents the unified state of reality. No adequate translation is therefore available, for which reason I have used the Tibetan term itself.

itself.

The inner [meditation] is closing the doors of the winds in the nerve channels. From the Thigle of the self-arising dimension there is first the attraction for the world of the body. From this both upper and lower nerve channels arise. From the joining of the two [kinds of] nerve channels the knot of the nerve channels (rtsa-mdud) becomes the navel. From this the secondary nerve channels generate the splendor of the body. From this the gathered entrails are expanded in the heart. From this there comes the innards. From these discursive conceptualizations arise. From these the nerve channels are conceptualized.

Whatever appears is self-appearing. Uncreated discursive conceptualizations are nakedly seen. The conceptualization is not enjoined, so the force of awareness does not flicker from this. . . . The profound knowledge which intuits the presence of wind is completely spread out. It is grasped by skillful means, so non-conceptualization abides in its own place. On the occasion [of uttering] "Ha" and "Phat" the dead winds are

> blown out.[18]

As I have noted above, this passage is obscure. What is required is not only a thorough understanding of the tantric physiology but instruction in the technique being explained. This information must await the release of further information in this area.

The secret meditation is presented under what are called three methods. These are: 1) The king sits on the throne, 2) The minister is held in prison, and 3) Subduing the public. These do not represent three separate techniques, but are rather combined into a single meditative process. The instructions found on the secret meditation in the PBD are cryptic, nonetheless I will present the key passages so that the reader may gain some insight into this technique.

> O rDo-rje 'Dzin-pa, take it well! The king is pure self-awareness, the Dharmakāya. The throne is this appearance as an object of the naturally pure sky. This is the Thigle of the [phenomenal] dimension's appearance as an object. The meaning of just this is free from a self. The totally pure dimension is the dwelling-throne for the wisdom of awareness. Now the lamp of Bodhicitta is

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[18] PBD, pp.153-154.

joined to the pure and clear self-nature of water.

Furthermore, [the Dharmakāya] abides by its existential mode and is diffused by its mode of appearing. It is just as the abode of a peregrine falcon abides in a rock mountain and all the [young falcons] stay at the door, for example. Just as in this simile the wisdom of awareness abides in the precious citta (mind). Its true essence is actually clear in the conception. . . .

Dwelling on the throne, the appearance of wisdom, is the unhindered self-clarity of the Thigle of great wisdom. The vital essence of wisdom abides in awareness, and wisdom is clear in awareness. Thus the spontaneously realized Thigle defeats defining marks and discursive conceptualization. In this way it abides in the unchanging, and other than self-appearance there is no other-appearance. . . .

The king abiding on the throne is that awareness is primordially pure in the state of the unchanging, unreified dimension, and is placed in the unwavering state from that [dimension]. . . .

Defining marks do not abide [in this state], so the eye looks at the center of the sky. The door of the winds in the nerve channels is closed.

The meditative absorption of the Bodhisattva abides in-between the Buddha and sentient beings. Thus the eye looks at the atmosphere. The throat is slightly contracted. The neck is placed on top of the shoulder. The three nerve channels squeeze the passage way of the winds.

The mental absorption and mind holding of gods and men is for the most part a defined mark. . . . The eye looks at the earth. As for this, the throat is slightly bent and the neck must nearly touch the chest.

The minister is the mind (<u>sems</u>). It does not arise above awareness, above the wind-force, thus it does not go together with conceptualization. It is clear in non-conceptualization. It is like a minister held in prison and has no counselor or enactor of what must be done, for example. It is not free from the body, so there is breath. Awareness has a horse, so it is like a minister. It is like being held in prison,

> for it has reason for conceptualization but cannot move.
>
> The five sense organs are like subjects. They are creators of karma. At this time they do not conceptualize clarity. This is like subduing the subjects.[19]

These are the PBD's statements regarding the secret meditation. The difficulty in interpreting these passages is clear. It will be observed that the PBD walks a very fine line between recommending actual practices which will further the disciple in his or her meditation and refraining from recommending any deeds or searching as part of the path. The meditation of the king sitting on the throne basically represents the conjunction of the Dharmakāya with the phenomenal dimension, bringing together the apparent subject and object into a unity. Holding the minister in prison seems to refer to not allowing the mind to conceptualize. Subduing the public seems to refer to ignoring the data of the sense faculties during meditation. This analysis is at present speculation, and a final understanding of these meditative techniques must await further information.

The meditation of the Great Perfection, then, is fundamentally the recognition of the view in its applied

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19 PBD, pp.155-157.

aspect. The particular techniques taught for the sake of inferior individuals are methods of applying the intuition of the view to an actual meditative session.

The practice of the Great Perfection is nothing more or less than the continual application of the view. It is beyond deeds and searching. Here follow some of the PBD's statements of Atiyoga practice:

> The practice which is without taking up and rejecting is without a cause for action, thus it is the supreme practice.[20]
>
> The practice of self-aware wisdom is like a mirror of precious jewels, for example. Wisdom is naturally unhindered, and the self-arising self-appearing acts without attraction or aversion.[21]
>
> The practice of the meaning of the view is like a great garuda soaring in the sky. It enjoys the spontaneous perfection free from deeds.[22]

The statements that the practice is totally without deeds or searching, attraction or aversion, may lead the reader to believe that any behavior is appropriate to the

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20 PBD, p.162.

21 PBD, p.162.

22 PBD, p.162.

Great Perfection. The PBD speaks out against this perception in the following phrase:

> The practice which is without recollection (dran-pa) must not be contrived as the way of yoga. It acts like a mad elephant. Yoga acts in what is bliss, without desire for a single thing, just as a bee relishes a flower.[23]

As in the section on Atiyoga meditation, there exists the tension in the PBD between speaking of no practice -- as the Atiyoga is beyond deeds and searching -- and actually recommending something to do. The PBD divides practice into two levels, that for the superior and that for the middling and inferior. Concerning the superior the PBD states the following:

> The practice as it is applied to an individual is intuition through the highest view. This is for those with very sharp senses. Not being separated from this state is the perfection of view, meditation and practice at one time. The result is not sought from another, so at that very moment the instantaneous enlightenment is

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[23] PBD, p.163.

perfected.[24]

With regard to middling and inferior individuals the PBD prescribes what it calls the practice of the four times and the practice of the three times. The information on these practices is cryptic, and undoubtedly requires the explanation of a qualified native expert. For the present I will present the important passages relating to these practices, with hopes that the insights provided may be supplemented by the future uncovering of more information.

The four times are the past, present, future, and primordially pure time (ka-dag-pa'i-dus). The PBD does not, however, present the practice of the four times in terms of this division, but focuses on practice as it relates to sleeping and waking up. The text reads as follows:

> Concerning the practice of the four times, at the time of sleep the five forces [of the senses] are condensed into the Base. The five senses, the force of the Base, the clear aspect of the Base, are unhindered, so the external object which relies on the five senses is cut off. The dualistic appearance of subject and object generates the five poisons. These, at the time of going to sleep are gathered upon the Base's clear

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[24] PBD, p.163.

aspect. Ordinary ignorance goes to sleep. . . .

If the recollection and conceptualization of a dream come forth or the recollection and conceptualization of awaking come forth at the time the dream is purified or awakened, grasping to the recollection of the meaning is self-liberated according to the instructions of self-clear awareness. Thus self-appearing appearance in its own place is liberated grasping, and if appearances are spread forth by skillfulness the dream is cut off.

The practice which liberates grasping is self-clear, like a butter lamp. At the time of getting up the five objects are widely dispersed. Even though the five kinds of [sense] object appear . . . they are taught to be called "their own selves" (<u>rang-rang</u>). They are caused to be cut off, so the force of flickering wind is the object and appearance's force of form.

If conceptualizations are born the meaning is recollected and non-grasping is born, thus grasping is liberated.

Conceptualizations are not put into the

> object of grasping and liberation. When there is skillfulness in taking up the practice conceptualizations decrease.
>
> Self-awareness, the Dharmakāya, is self-clear without changing in the four times. For example the essential nature of the sun is not separated from clarity and exists in accompaniment with it. The Dharmakāya of awareness is like this.[25]

It is not entirely clear just what practice this practice of the four times represents. The practice of the three times is somewhat less obscure. Traditionally the three times are said to be the past, present, and future. In this practice of the three times, however, they are different. The description of the practice of the three times follows:

> For the sake of individuals who are suitable receptacles for the teaching, the practice of the three times is enacted in this way: In the three times the Dharmakāya of self-awareness is like the sun which is not separated from clarity. Self-awareness is not separated from clarity, but the power of non-recognition and evil tendencies brings

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[25] PBD, pp.164-165.

forth obscuration to the clarity. Therefore the practice of the three times is dear.

[The three times are:] 1) The time when self-clear self-awareness is equanimously composed, 2) The time which follows upon agitation from this, and 3) The time of discursive conceptualization at the rising up of the five poisons. These three are not separate from the Dharmakāya. This is explained to be the final settlement of practice.

At the time agitation comes forth from this equanimously composed state in the clarity of the Dharmakāya, that which comes forth as the object is the appearance of [the Dharmakāya's] force. Conceptualization which creates grasping is self-liberated, so the Dharmakāya of self-awareness is self-recollecting. Thus conceptualizations which grasp at a self are emptied out. Therefore conceptualization which creates grasping is liberated to its own place in the self-appearance of appearance.[26]

This practice of the three times, then, appears to be a

26 PBD, p.166.

technique for identifying every moment of perception as the Dharmakāya itself. When the objects of the senses are intuited to be the manifest force of the Dharmakāya, the phenomenal dimension, all grasping towards them disappears naturally. In this way the practice is not a conscious abandonment of the defilements, but rather a recognition that the objects of defiled consciousness are pure in their own nature. Thus it is apparent that the PBD does believe practice without deeds and searching is not only possible but mandatory.

The result of the Atiyoga is nothing more or less than the direct intuition of reality, the five wisdoms and the three kayas. The PBD does not present an extensive explanation of the result of the Great Perfection. A concise passage sums up the result of the Atiyoga:

> The teaching on the way of being [of the result] is that reality is clear without interior or exterior. Awareness is pervasive without interior or exterior. The non-dual Dharmakāya is the adamantine body (lus). Self-clarity abides in the state of non-grasping. Self-aware wisdom is the Sambhogakāya. The true nature of the object is the five vessels of the eye of wisdom. In appearance they are like the rainbow colors of the insubstantial sky. Inside of these

> the five Nirmāṇakāyas are clear. There is no conceptualization of the clarity, like a butter lamp which is inside a pot. The three kāyas abide in inner clarity without joining or separation.[27]

The result of the Atiyoga is the intuition of the three kāyas, and thus is Buddhahood itself. In actuality, the view, meditation, practice, and result of the Great Perfection all amount to recognition of true being and continuing in this recognition. This state of true being, the Dharmakāya and phenomenal dimension in their indivisibility, is finally the Base, the path, and the result in totality. This is Buddhahood itself, primordial, present, and all-encompassing. This is the summation of the Great Perfection.

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[27] PBD, p.179.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

This thesis has been devoted to a study of the history and content of the *Tantra of Great Unreified Clear Meaning* (PBD). The PBD claims a very ancient history, asserting its origins to be with the famed founder of the Great Perfection tradition dGa-rab rDo-rje who is thought to have lived in the first century C.E. The PBD is a "treasure" (*gter-ma*) text, which is believed to have been hidden in Tibet by the teacher Padmasambhava during the eighth century C.E. and discovered by Guru Chos-kyi dBang-phyug in the thirteenth century. Guru Chos-dbang taught this text in the year 1257, and it was written down by one of his disciples. The PBD came to be included in the great collection of Tantric texts known as the *Hundred Thousand Tantras of the rNying-ma* (*rNying-ma rGyud-'bum*), and is found in this collection today. As such, the PBD represents the teachings of the rNying-ma school of Tibetan Buddhism in general, and their

thirteenth century manifestation in particular.

The essence of the teaching of the PBD is that all living beings have a pure awareness (*rig-pa*) which is non-conceptual, uncontrived, and the fundamental state of the mind (*sems*). This awareness is the fundamental ground on which both the deluded experience of samsara and the pure experience of nirvana are based. In this sense awareness is referred to as the Base, as it is the basis of both samsara and nirvana. When this awareness is falsely intuited based on the primary ignorance of subject-object duality and the emotional defilements which arise from this duality there is the experience of samsara. When this awareness is directly intuited it is Buddhahood itself.

The fundamental ground of awareness is referred to as the Base abiding wisdom and from this wisdom all other manifestations of wisdom are thought to come forth. The PBD speaks of five wisdoms, in particular, which represent awareness in its empty, clear, non-dual, and differentiated aspects as well as its manifest force. As this awareness is nothing less that Buddhahood, the PBD also identifies pure awareness with the highest principle of Buddhahood, the Dharmakāya. This awareness in its manifest form as wisdom also appears as the manifest forms of Buddha, the Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya.

In keeping with the doctrines of the rNying-ma school the PBD speaks of nine vehicles, or levels of spiritual

pursuit. The first eight of these are rejected as representing only the interpretable meaning (drang-don) of the Buddha's teaching, while the ninth, or Great Perfection, is upheld as the definitive meaning (nges-don) of Buddha's teaching. It is only on this ninth level that the teachings of instant enlightenment are propounded.

This instant enlightenment is called "recognition" (ngo-sprod) in the PBD, for it is the recognition that awareness itself is Buddhahood that liberates from samsara instantly. It is on the point of recognition that a practitioner actually enters the vehicle of the Great Perfection. The Great Perfection vehicle, or Atiyoga, consists in maintaining this recognition, which is in fact the view, meditation, practice and result of this path. That is to say that the view of Atiyoga is an understanding that awareness is Buddhahood, the meditation and practice of Atiyoga are methods of abiding in this understanding, and the result of Atiyoga is the state of Buddhahood itself, pure awareness.

Thus the PBD teaches that Buddhahood, as pure awareness, is both the ground of all being and the result of the spiritual path. The purpose in explaining the path at all is to overcome the delusion which prevents living beings from intuiting the perfect reality that underlies this delusion.

The present study of the PBD opens the door for much

further research. A study is needed, first of all, of any other "treasure" texts revealed by Guru Chos-dbang to determine whether they contain similar or identical teachings to those found in the PBD. This study would also do much to clarify many of the obscure points found in the PBD. Such as study would add to the knowledge of the state of the rNying-ma school's Buddhology in the thirteenth century, as well as clarify the major themes found in the PBD. The present study begins this effort in identifying and examining one of Guru Chos-dbang's major "treasure" discoveries.

The PBD represents only one text in a vast store of literature devoted to the Great Perfection tradition. Almost none of this literature has been explored by Western scholarship. There remains a great deal of work to be done on the history and development of ideas in the Great Perfection tradition in general. Of special interest will be the determination of the impact of other schools of Buddhism and historical events in Tibet upon this tradition. This study depends on first developing specific information about the Great Perfection as it appears throughout Tibetan history. The present study is intended to begin this investigation.

It remains to be determined whether the concepts expressed in such texts as the PBD are representations of pure Indian Buddhism transplanted into Tibet, whether there

are original Tibetan developments in this teaching, and whether Chinese influences might not also be present in this tradition.

The relationship of Great Perfection thinking to other schools of Buddhist philosophy remains to be studied. The chapter on the nine vehicles in the present thesis begins this study, yet there is certainly a great deal of research to be done to clarify this relationship further.

As a treatise representing the esoteric branch of the Buddhist tradition the teachings in the PBD might also be compared to mystical traditions from other parts of the world and periods in history. Such a study will no doubt require extensive knowledge of languages and history as well as a methodology that will allow honest interpretation of the differing and similar ideas found in such mystical traditions. For the sake of scholars whose comprehension of Tibetan is limited studies such as the present one will do much to make the ideas of the Great Perfection available to thinkers in comparative religious traditions.

Thus it can be seen that the present study of the PBD represents a beginning to major investigation on many levels. It has been my purpose in presenting this analysis of the PBD to begin this investigation with an authentic text representing the Great Perfection school in general and the "treasure" tradition in particular. It is my hope that the information provided in this study will not only stand

as a starting point for my own research in this area but will also serve as an encouragement to other scholars to pursue in-depth knowledge of the Great Perfection tradition.

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Appendix A

Names of the PBD

The one hundred twenty second chapter of the PBD (pp.280-283) lists the PBD's several names along with reasons for these names. The passage in question is of interest in identifying the PBD, and is included for this purpose. The passage in question follows:

"This *Tantra of Great Unreified Clear Meaning* (*sPros-bral Don-gsal Chen-po'i rGyud*) of mine teaches the instant enlightenment into the root of all dharmas, so it is taken to be *The Great Tantra of Sudden Penetration of the Root* (*rTsa-ba Car-phog rGyud-chen*).

"It teaches the one knowledge [that brings] liberation to all, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of the Great Key of Further Teaching* (*Yang-tig lDe-mig Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It is the unification into equality with Buddhahood itself in the present, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of the Great Uniffication into Equality with Buddhahood* (*Sangs-*

rgyas mNyam-sbyor Chen-po'i rGyud).

"It teaches without reification the final settlement, so it is taken to be *The Great Tantra of Unreified Clear Meaning* (*sPros-bral Don-gsal rGyud-chen*).

"It teaches the recognition which shows one's true nature to oneself, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of the Great Secret Recognition* (*gSang-ba'i Ngo-sprod Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It perfectly teaches the existential mode just as it is, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of the Great Total Perfection from inside the Great Perfection* (*rDzogs-chen Nang-nas Yang-rDzogs Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It teaches the great undefiled purity of view and meditation, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of Great Undefiled Primordial Purity* (*Dri-med Ka-dag Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It teaches the spontaneous realization of faults as qualities, so it taken to be *The Great Tantra of Great Spontaneous Realization* (*lHun-grub Chen-po'i rGyud-chen*). It teaches the self-arising Wisdom arising in oneself, so it is taken be to the *The Tantra of the Great Self-arising of Wisdom* (*Ye-shes Rang-shar Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It clears away the gloom of the darkness of ignorance from the root, so it is taken to be *The Tantra of the Great Clearing Away of the Darkness of Ignorance* (*Ma-rig Mun-sel Chen-po'i rGyud*).

"It leaps forth from the pit of all samsara, so it is taken to be called _The Tantra of the Great Leaping From the Pit_ (_Dong-sprug Chen-po'i rGyud_).

"It cuts off all delusion at the root, so it is taken to be called _The Tantra which Cuts Delusion at the Root_ (_'Khrul-pa rTsad-gcod rGyud_).

"It gives liberation from the river of samsara with a boat, so it is taken to be called _The Tantra of the Great Boat of Liberation_ (_Gru-sgrol Chen-po'i rGyud_).

"It expels the fever of the obscurations from its depths, so it is taken to be called _The Tantra of the Great Supreme Doctor_ (_sMan-pa Che-mchog rGyud_).

"It teaches the defeat of the four Maras from their roots, so it is taken to be _The Great Tantra of the Great Defeat of Mara_ (_bDud-'joms Chen-po'i rGyud-chen_).

"It teaches the unexcelled great meaning through opening it up, so it is taken to be _The Great Tantra Which Opens the Great Force_ (_rTsal-chen sPrugs-pa'i rGyud-chen_)."